BING

Spring
2012

No. 160

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

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UK	£15 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£16 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$40 per annum
Rest of World	£18 per annum

All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to *The International Club Crosby* with the exception of::

(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins
(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

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EDITORIAL

Ah, spring, spring, spring. It's anybody's spring, alright. But let's hope that spring WON'T be a little late this year for those members living in areas that have been braving the snow and cold for the past few months! Yes, it's that time of year when we're all feeling that 'ol spring fever once again as we welcome you to the spring issue of *BING* magazine, and the kick off of the ICC's 76th birthday celebration.

Some exciting news to report. The long awaited restoration of Universal's all-Technicolor 1930 musical *The King of Jazz,* starring bandleader Paul Whiteman in the title role, has apparently begun! This was Bing's first film appearance, and has been out of print for years since its initial release on VHS tape back in the mid-1980's by MCA/Universal. The washed out picture should finally be corrected, and we should also be treated to the original 1930 full-length cut of the film, not the heavily edited 1933 reissue length featured on the tape. A beautiful, but fragile 35mm nitrate print of the original 1930 version has turned up at The Library of Congress. Obviously, this restoration will take time, how much time is anyone's guess. But the good news is, a much sought after DVD release should be 'in the pipeline' at some point!

We have another jam-packed issue awaiting your perusal and (hopefully) approval, for which Malcolm will share further highlights below. One such highlight concerns our honorary member Regis Philbin, who released a new memoir last November that subsequently made the *New York Times'* best seller list. It features the very first chapter devoted solely to Bing. I'll have a review of this highly-recommended book and more information on it later in this issue.

On a more serious note, we want to wish a speedy and full recovery to another honorary member, Andy Williams, as he courageously battles bladder cancer. I know we all send our prayers, well wishes, and positive thoughts to Andy during this difficult and trying time for him and his family.

Lastly, for those members in the United States and Canada, if you haven't already done so, be sure to send your ICC membership dues for 2012 to Wig as soon as possible to ensure you won't miss a single issue. I know he will be most grateful for your prompt attention and consideration.

And now, here's Malcolm.

Greg Van Beek

Thanks, Greg. Since our last magazine we have of course had the Christmas season when Bing's voice was heard all over the place. Don't know whether it was my imagination, but I didn't seem to hear him as much as in earlier years. Bing did however feature in many articles in the media around Christmas and afterwards when the Golf Tournament was underway and we have reproduced the more important ones in this issue.

There is also significant news about the Bing Crosby Theatre in Spokane, a report on Bing being featured in the BBC's *Mastermind* programme and there's an Irish segment which inevitably includes our old friend George O'Reilly. Martin McQuade makes several substantial contributions to this issue notably in *Books 'N' Bing*. Members' letters are always interesting and this time is no exception. Keith Parkinson's *A-Z* may have finished but he is still here with *Celluloid Crosby*. Ken Crossland does not have many new issues to review this time but he comes up with a very interesting examination of one of Bing's Spanish tracks. Also we have raided the BINGANG and BING magazine archives to see what was happening 75 and 50 years ago. We may make this a regular feature if members like it. Gord Atkinson misses this issue but he promises to be back next time.

Incidentally, BingCrosby.com continues to add fascinating items to its site and it's well worth taking the time to sit down to watch and listen to the contents of the video and audio vaults. Wonderful stuff!

The front and back cover photos in this issue have been provided by Greg Van Beek and the letter on the back inside cover is to James Sheldon, the director of Bing's sitcom series. Bing wrote some great letters.

Malcolm Macfarlane

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SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

As I write my report in February I am listening to "Bing in Dixieland" the 14th CD issued by Bing Crosby Enterprises and the mix is sheer magic! Bing was obviously very happy when singing Dixieland music and his love of the genre comes right at you as you listen to these captivating tracks. The producer is once again Robert S. Bader who deserves special praise and the notes and cover design are by our members Martin McQuade and Jon Oye respectively. I urge members to add this CD to their growing collection of BCE titles.

FINANCE

One topic I need to draw to members' attention, at an early stage, is the state of our finances, which are healthy for 2012 and possibly 2013, but thereafter I anticipate that we will fall short of the monies necessary to maintain the issue of three quality magazines per year.

The reasons for the decline in net income are inflation, falling membership and the loss of the surplus from CD sales in the years ahead.

Our benefactors' contributions (many listed in this issue under donations) and the modest surplus from CD sales have meant that the accounts have shown a respectable balance each year, thus allowing us to maintain our high standards and the issue of a tri-annual journal worthy of Bing's name.

Notwithstanding our excellent record, we have had to make a small adjustment to the quality of paper used for the front covers to reduce weight and to hopefully save on postage (UK postal rates go up in April). Additionally, our hard-working American representative, Wig Wiggins, will be very grateful for any reduction in weight as he trundles to the post office to despatch 400 plus magazines to his North American members.

I will keep the finances under close review during 2012 and will report back to the membership in December, but meanwhile, I would like members to consider how we might maintain our high standards in the face of a declining income and membership.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members of ICC with a wish that their involvement with the club will bring them interest and enjoyment as they share their hobby with fellow Bing enthusiasts.

UNITED KINGDOM

Josie Jenkins (Romney, Cardiff), David Grossman (London).

GERMANY

Mario Ballantone (Hildsheim).

NORTH AMERICA

Details will appear in the summer edition of the magazine.

DONATIONS

We very much appreciate the much needed financial help provided by the following generous members.

Edward Broadley who lives in Leeds, is partially sighted and is a great admirer of the ICC and the work done to honour Bing's name. Edward has gifted the club a substantial sum for which we are truly grateful.

Edward's generosity is shared by members - Jean Rainey, Michael Collins, Paul Hennessey, Frank Startup, John Davis, Bill Green, Donald Bostock, John Salisbury, Roger Addey, Christine Mann, Matthew Sprott, Tom Sim, Nico van der Seijp, Dennis Saville, Nicolas Morrison, Ron Holder, Pierre de Bie, George

Patmore, June Manton, Tom Mayer, Frank Challenger, Bob Halls, Des Cusak, Les Waters, Renato Faillace, Barbara Holmes, Mervyn Thomas, N S Carter, R E Sharpe, Ken Heason, Robert Larkin, Lew Grasby, Charles Wilkinson, Tom Hughes, Geoff Vizard, Tony Hale, John Benstead, John R Byrd, Bill England, Geoffrey Robinson, Frans van der Kolff, Anna Monaghan, Alf Plummer, Klaus Halm, Jack Winegrad, John Bignell, Bert Bishop, Leslie Mills, Arthur Blood and Jonathan Cook.

Donations and legacies are very welcome and gratefully acknowledged and we thank our benefactors for their continuing support.

DEATHS

There is a separate entry in the "Once In A While" section about the recent loss of **Mozelle Seger** and we were also saddened to learn of the deaths of the following members.

Noel George "Nick" Carter aged 95 (Deal, Kent), Gordon Thomas (Eyres Monsell, Leicester), Ray Norton (Walton-on-Thames, Surrey) and Sylvia Lawrence (Cambridge)

Frans van der Kolff informed us of Sylvia's passing and of his long friendship through Bing with her. Sylvia took a keen interest in Frans's family and shared her Bing enthusiasm with them. Sylvia gave generously to the ICC and helped many members with their collecting.

Nick, Gordon and Ray were also very enthusiastic members and I will miss their letters and friendly phone calls. Nick was an artist and this showed in his handwriting which, even in his nineties, was 'copperplate'.

We extend our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Nick, Gordon, Ray and Sylvia.

BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS – Vols. 1 to 9 (Sepia Records)

These attractive CDs remain available from me with the price for the UK being £7.00 (postpaid) and the price for Europe £7.50. Members in the US & Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins and in Australia/New Zealand from David Currington. The price for members in the rest of the world is £8.50.

Volume 10, the final issue, will be available shortly and you should obtain your copy from your respective representative. If you can afford it, please be generous and buy two copies as this will help us keep our subscription rate as low as possible.

BING CROSBY and the KRAFT MUSIC HALL – ICC 75th anniversary issue.

This acclaimed CD remains available from me and you are welcome to send for additional copies if you require them.

CROSBY CALENDAR 2012

Members should now have received their pre-ordered calendar and at the time of writing a few copies remain available for those who still wish to obtain one.

LEEDS 2012 (47th meeting)

Sunday October 7th 2012 is the date for your diary.

Until summer, my warmest greetings to all members.

Michael Crampton

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31st DECEMBER 2011

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Subscriptions and donations	10884	Production of BING magazine	10840
Sales - Calendars	1539	Calendars	1622
Leeds meeting - receipts	628	AGM (Leeds) costs	538
Sales – Books / back issues	149	Secretarial costs	362
Sales – Sepia CDs	5993	Sepia CDs - costs	6405
Sales – KMH CDs	1907	Woodbury CD costs	3
Sales – Woodbury CDs	10	Editorial costs	107
Legacy from deceased member	150	KMH CD costs	149
		Postage – books/back issues	81
Bank balance 31/12/2010	10035	Bank balance 31/12/2011	11188
	31295		31295

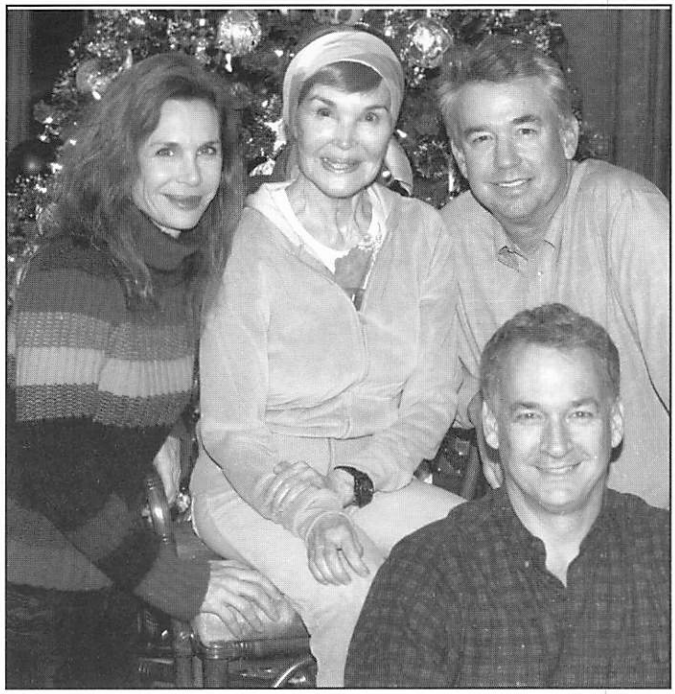
Note:

1. The accounts are a simple unaudited Income and Expenditure summary. Amounts owing and stocks of books and CDs held are not shown. Funds held on a temporary basis by the various international representatives are not shown either.
2. The club is able to cover its anticipated expenditure in 2012.

Michael Crampton. Secretary/Treasurer

The Crosby family at Christmas

Our honorary president got together with Mary, Nathaniel and Harry at Christmas and they sent us this very nice picture. It's good to see Kathryn looking so well.



Christmas spirit

An editorial in the *Washington Post* on Christmas Day touched on Bing's most famous song.

In the later stages of World War II, Bing Crosby was in Europe to make one of his many appearances before U.S. troops, in this case a paratrooper outfit in France. Before the show, a tough-looking sergeant asked America's most popular singer whether he planned to perform "White Christmas." Crosby said he did; it was a song requested by GIs at every stop, regardless of the season. In that case, said the soldier, he would have to absent himself. "I'll listen from behind the portable kitchen," he said. "It's no good for the men's morale to see their sergeant crying."

That incident, recounted by Jody Rosen in his book "White Christmas: The Story of an American Song," is as good an explanation as any of why Bing Crosby's voice is still heard this time of year in supermarkets, shops, eateries, elevators and just about every other place people congregate. "White Christmas," for many of us, captures the spirit of this day. It met a deep need and evoked powerful emotions through four years of war, and in some way — perhaps indefinable — it has continued to do so ever since.

Crosby introduced the song 70 years ago on his Christmas Eve radio show, just 18 days after Pearl Harbor. Although it was the work of the country's most beloved songwriter, Irving Berlin, there was some doubt as to whether it would catch on. But in fact America was well on its way into the age of mass nationwide media — radio, records, movies — and for families separated by war, the song's evocation of longing for home and loved ones (also voiced in another Crosby wartime classic still heard today: "I'll Be Home for Christmas") proved to be exactly what was right and necessary. "White Christmas," especially after it was featured in the 1942 Crosby movie *Holiday Inn*, became a sort of universal lament for Americans here and overseas, broadcast and distributed on phonograph records to thousands of soldiers, sailors and airmen.

It's a Christmas song that is neither religious nor particularly inspirational, written by a Russian Jewish immigrant who proved to have a marvelous feel for what moved Americans of all sorts. What he captured in that simple and sentimental song was the universal longing for times past and familiar faces, voices and places (however idealized — and to be honest, how many people generally have white Christmases?). In that sense, it stands as an example of how Christmas has become for many, if not most, in America a national holiday, a source of goodwill and (in the words of an earlier songwriter) comfort and joy in times of war, peace, uncertainty, darkness and doubt.

White Christmas is the song people look forward to hearing

NEW YORK, N.Y. – December 14, 2011 – For almost everyone, the holidays bring out both good and bad feelings. Most people have that one thing they dislike and the one thing they look forward to each year. On the positive side, almost three in five Americans (58%) say they most look forward to spending time with friends and family during the holiday season. Fewer numbers say they most look forward to holiday dinners and parties (8%), finding and giving presents (7%), putting up holiday decorations (4%), watching television specials and hearing holiday songs on the radio (4%) and getting presents (2%) while one in ten (11%) say they do not look forward to the upcoming holidays.

These are some of the results of ***The Harris Poll*** of 2,499 adults surveyed online between November 7 and 14, 2011 by **Harris Interactive**.

Holiday Songs

For one month each year the airwaves and stores are filled with holiday songs. Some are ones people look forward to and others make people cringe and often the same song has both reactions. Topping the list of the songs people most look forward to each holiday season is White Christmas, followed by Silent Night and then Oh Holy Night. Rounding out the top five are Jingle Bells and Little Drummer Boy. Tied for sixth on the list of songs people look forward to are The Christmas Song

and Winter Wonderland, followed by Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer, Carol of the Bells and then Silver Bells.

By the end of the season, the one song people wish they could never hear again is Jingle Bells, followed by Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, White Christmas and Jingle Bell Rock. Rounding out the top ten are Little Drummer Boy, Feliz Navidad, We Wish You a Merry Christmas, the Twelve Days of Christmas and Silent Night. Interestingly, five songs are on both of these lists.

Dreaming of a white Christmas at former Bing Crosby estate

A Toluca Lake home still referred to as the Bing Crosby Estate despite a succession of other entertainment industry owners has sold for $4.02 million.

The singer and actor lived on the property from 1936 until early January 1943, when the 20-room house there was gutted in a Christmas tree fire, according to Times archives. Crosby was out at the time of the fire. His wife, Dixie Lee, and their four sons escaped injury.

The damage to the structure and its contents was estimated at $200,000, and the family's cocker spaniel, a complete collection of Crosby's recordings, his golf trophies and his pipe collection were lost. Among items recovered from the ruins was $2,000 cash in the pocket of one of Crosby's coats.

The rebuilt Southern Colonial that stands on the site has six bedrooms, 5 1/2 bathrooms and five fireplaces in 7,132 square feet. There is a living room with marble fireplace, a billiards room and a den with a wet bar.

The 2 acres of gated grounds include rose gardens, fruit trees, a tennis court with grandstands, a swimming pool, a 2 1/2-bathroom cabana with changing rooms, sitting area and a kitchen, and a two-bedroom, two-bathroom guesthouse with a kitchen.

The estate was a childhood home of Micky Dolenz, the Monkees drummer and singer. Subsequent owners included actor Andy Griffith in the 1980s and actor Jerry Van Dyke and his wife, Shirley, who sold the home in 1997 for $1.93 million, public records show.

Lauren Beale, *Los Angeles Times*
December 22, 2011

6th. Annual Bing Crosby Festival

This took place at the Bing Crosby Theatre in Spokane on December 10. The order of events was:
Noon: White Christmas (1954)
2:30: Holiday Inn (1942)
4:30: Going My Way (1944)
7:00: Howard Crosby Sings Bing's Classics
7:30: White Christmas (1954)

The web site for Advocates for the Bing Crosby Theater had more to tell us.

The Oscar Bing won for his performance in *Going My Way* was on display. It was on loan for the day from Gonzaga University. Also on display was the contract Bing signed to make *Going My Way* in 1944. Interestingly, he signed the contract "Harry Crosby". The contract was recently donated to Gonzaga by Bing's widow, Kathryn Crosby.

About 60 photos covered the lobby walls, showing Bing from childhood to aging star, and included both studio photos and informal moments. A group of photos showed him at his Hayden Lake, Idaho retreat.

Bill Stimson, president of the Advocates for the Bing Crosby Theater, which sponsored the annual Christmas Festival, said the photos were drawn from the best three Crosby collections in the world: the Crosby Family's own collection, Gonzaga's collection, and a 5,000-picture collection recently purchased from an estate in Britain and brought to Spokane by the Jerry and Patty Dicker Foundation. *(Editor: This was the Ron Bosley collection).*

"I was talking to Stephanie Plowman, curator of the Crosby Collection at Gonzaga, and we both figure this is likely the most comprehensive showing of Bing Crosby photos that has ever been brought together in one place," Stimson said.

Among the photos on display were 20 large, framed pictures recently donated to the Theater by Kathryn Crosby.

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Free punch and cookies were provided too! Sounds like a great day and it's good to see the folks in Spokane remembering Bing in this way.

But in January, we were surprised to see the following headline and article.

Spokane's Bing Crosby Theater up for sale

The Bing Crosby Theater is up for sale. Owner Mitch Silver says that he has plans to sell it this year.

Silver bought the theater in 2004 for $788,000 from the Metropolitan Mortgage & Securities Co., after that company's financial meltdown. The building, constructed in 1915 and originally called the Metropolitan Theater of Performing Arts, or simply "The Met," requires some maintenance, according to Silver, including work on sidewalks and repairing water damage on the roof.

"At this point, we don't have a sale," says Silver. "I had someone interested but we could not make a deal."

The building is now valued at $807,000, the Spokane County Assessor's office told the *Journal of Business*. Silver says that the building could sell for $1.3

million after repairs.

The Friends of the Bing Crosby Theater group, which helped rename the theater in 2006, has been interested in purchasing the building for the community, according to Silver.

"I would love to work with the group and give to the community," Silver says. "I have met with them, but there are no concrete plans."

Since the Building is registered with the Spokane Register of Historic Places, repairs will have to be cleared with the register's Landmark Commission to make sure that the restoration of the building respects the historic integrity of the theater, says Kristen Griffin, a historic preservation officer with the group.

"Rehabilitation of the building means that the building can be changed to be useful, but we have to protect the building's character," she says. "The owners would have to agree to a particular set of standards."

According to Silver, he plans to hold an auction for the building in the spring.

(*The Pacific Northwest Inlander*, January 23)

Then in February we had this good news from a press release.

GVD Commercial Properties Purchases The Bing Crosby Theater

GVD Commercial Properties, Inc. has purchased the Bing Crosby Theater in Spokane. The nearly century-old building at the corner of Sprague and Lincoln was sold by local businessman Mitch Silver in a deal that both parties announced on Feb. 16. The purchase price was not disclosed.

GVD president, Gerald Dicker, says the theater will continue its present operation as a community theater and as a venue for dozens of national shows each year.

Dicker said the only change under the new ownership will be that the theater will undergo extensive repairs and refurbishing.

"Our first priority is to preserve this beautiful building," Dicker said. "In whatever we do, we will respect its historical integrity. This building is a part of Spokane history."

Dicker said the building will retain the Bing Crosby name. In fact he hopes, with the help of Gonzaga University and local citizen groups, to expand its role as a place where photos and memorabilia of Bing Crosby's long career are displayed.

Dicker pointed out the 1915 building is a rare example of a perfectly preserved silent movie theater. It is remembered by generations of Spokanites as the State Theater, and later as the Met.

The Theater also happens to be the place where singer Bing Crosby started his career. It was re-named for Crosby in 2006. "In the future, I believe this building could become a major tourist draw for Spokane," Dicker said.

"My long-term hope for this building is that it be preserved as a permanent landmark in Spokane," Dicker said. "We want to fix it up, to protect it, and then some day perhaps sell it to a trust so that it is a possession of the whole Spokane community. It is an essential part of Spokane history and should be protected for future generations."

A representative of a group of citizens who have been interested in the future of the theater said they are in complete support of the transfer of ownership. Mike Kobluk, representing The Bing Crosby Theater Legacy Group, a volunteer citizen organization, said its members are excited about Dicker's plan for the theater. "This is an important step toward securing that building's future. Every old building periodically requires an infusion of loving care and long-term planning, and we think Jerry Dicker is going to give that to the Bing," Kobluk said.

Bill Stimson, president of another volunteer group called Advocates for the Bing Crosby Theater, added: "We think this is a wonderful development for the theater. Jerry Dicker loves that building and will do right by it."

Bing on *Mastermind*

Mastermind is a British quiz show, well known for its challenging questions, intimidating setting and air of seriousness. The basic format of *Mastermind* is that four contestants face two rounds, one on a specialised subject of the contestant's choice (for two minutes), the other a general knowledge round (for two and a half minutes). To succeed, you have to answer instantly or say "pass" as this gives you time for more questions.

On February 10, the edition shown on BBC2 had Malcolm Sumner, a schoolteacher from Cheltenham, selecting *The Life and Career of Bing Crosby* as his specialist subject. The questions he was asked by John Humphrys are shown below and please have a go at answering them instantly. The answers can be found in *Bing on the Box*.

1. Which song first performed by Bing Crosby in the film *Holiday Inn* is still one of the biggest selling records of all time?

2. Crosby played Father Chuck O'Malley in two films. *Going My Way* is the first. What's the title of the sequel?

3. Who was the third member of Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys alongside Al Rinker and Crosby? He co-wrote "Mississippi Mud" for the new threesome.

4. When Crosby got married, it prompted a number of headlines, such as "20th Century Fox star marries obscure crooner." Whom did he marry?

5. Which song performed by Crosby in *The Big Broadcast* became his theme song and was an instant best-seller?

6. Which of his school friends is credited with first calling him "Bingo" from a character in a newspaper comic feature? It was later shortened to Bing.

7. What starring role did he play in the '66 remake of John Wayne's *Stagecoach* directed by Gordon Douglas?

8. In the late 1940s, Crosby bought a share in which Major League baseball team that didn't win the World Series until 1960?

9. In 1931, he recruited a fellow former pupil of Gonzaga High School as his chauffeur and movie stand-in. Who was he?

10. Crosby was nominated for an Oscar for his role as an alcoholic singer and actor in which film? It was his co-star Grace Kelly who actually won one.

11. What's the name of the church in Las Vegas where Crosby finally married Kathryn Grant in 1957 after the wedding had been called off several times?

12. What's the title of the *Road* film originally intended to be called *The Road to Mandalay* in which he starred with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour?

13. When Crosby became the first signing for the new Decca record label, he recorded "Just A-Wearyin' for You" and which other track?

14. Which guitarist did he first meet when they both played with the Paul Whiteman Band? Crosby toured with him until the guitarist's death in 1933 after a routine operation to have his tonsils removed.

15. What condition did Crosby suffer from which made him unfit for service in the Second World War?

16. What was the title of his last album which included a tune for each part of the year including "April Showers" and "June in January"?

17. In which 1935 film co-starring W. C. Fields did Crosby have to don side-burns, a moustache - and a girdle because he'd put on weight?

****

Malcolm Sumner responded to an item on the Crosby Fan World site and your Editor has since been in touch with him and supplied him with a complimentary copy of the magazine. He was asked how he came to like Bing and this is what he had to say.

British TV in the 1970s – only three channels, and invariably (Sunday afternoons on BBC2) a black-and-white film, often shown as part of a series – the Fred Astaire / Ginger Rogers musicals were the catalyst for a fascination with 1930s Hollywood. Irving Berlin famously preferred Astaire as an interpreter of his songs, but easy to transfer one's loyalty to Bing. The combination of romantic glamour, easy-going insouciance and masculine banter makes it easy to understand how Bing's demographic was so broad for so many years. (I'm sure the Crosby-Hope-Lamour triangle provides ample material for many academic theses, but the girls always gave as good as they got when they were allowed into the act!) And Bing was still around in my teenage years, continuing to make recordings; 'That's What Life Is All About' (however homespun) a gentle antidote to the self-proclamation of 'My Way'.

I was lucky enough to go up to Oxford in 1977; while half the student population was marching against Thatcherism, the 'Brideshead revival' was also in full swing, harking back to a supposedly more glamorous age. Bing's death was announced in my first weekend at university and the flood of tributes and obituaries brought an increased sense of loyalty plus media interest; a series on BBC Radio 2 of Bing's weekly broadcasts (Ken Carpenter, John Scott Trotter et al, and given a retrospective introduction by the wonderful Benny Green) showed many of us a whole new facet of Crosby's career, central to his success and his rapport with audiences.

And the 'standards' of the 1930s and 40s, as interpreted by Bing were so much better at dealing with the pains of young love than listening to (for example) Fleetwood Mac or the Stones! Heartbreak was commutated into music; it happened to the best of them – a few bars of 'I guess I'll have to change my plan' (I know that was Astaire and Buchanan!) and perspective would be restored before the movie glided inevitably to its happy conclusion.

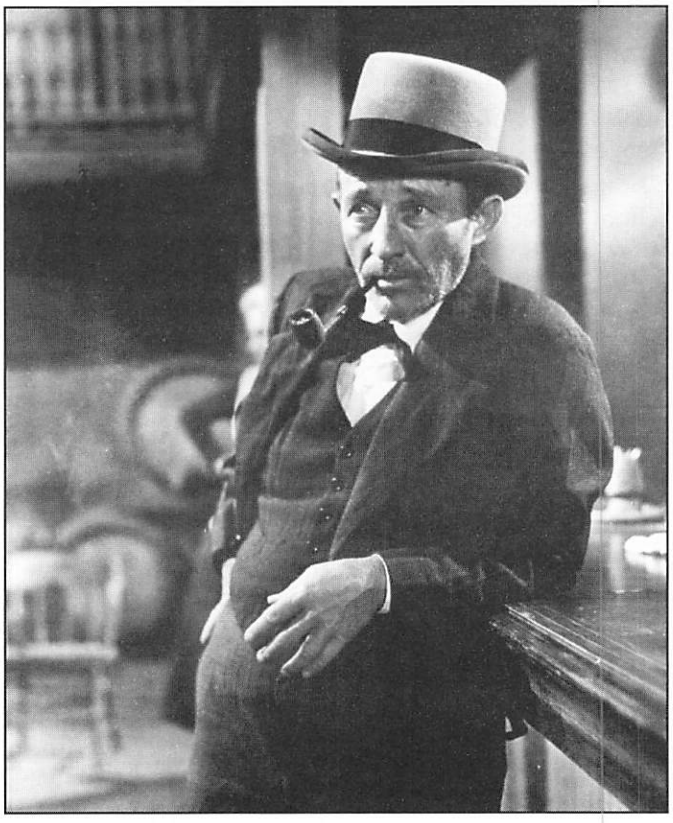
By my mid-twenties I'd managed to catch most of Bing's films and knew nearly all of the movie songs; so it's been fantastic in recent years to discover so many new gems on 'YouTube', including all the clips uploaded by 'Nicole Y' (I believe) and 'bingcrosby1903'. Having taught a little bit of Film Studies alongside English, History and many other school subjects, I was able to smuggle some footage of Bing into the lessons, if only for the in-jokes about the studio system ('Paramount will protect us, 'cos we're signed for five more years') and always feel a touch of pride when students make favourable or enthusiastic comments!

At the risk of opening up what I'm sure is an ongoing controversy, I have to confess that for me the 1930s were the 'golden age' – films like *Two for Tonight* have become new favourites. Not only was the tonality and phrasing fantastic but Bing was hitting the high notes! I'm not sure if my unashamed preference for the earlier stuff makes me a purist or a heretic! However, Bing's later work remains a triumph of 'graceful ageing' and the change of tone brought new aspects to the fore; *High Society* and even *Robin and the Seven Hoods* bear comparison with any of the earlier films. I've even stopped apologising for the Crosby / Bowie duet because so many non-Crosby fans say 'But we really like that song'!

Regarding the quiz – I was a reluctant contestant on *Mastermind* but when a friend had a go last series and did quite well, I got nagged by my family to send in an online application. It seemed like one way of using the

store of pointless 'general' information that some of us tend to accumulate over the years, but which specialist subjects to choose? You have to submit four (in case you make it through all three rounds of the contest) with reasons for your choice and evidence of knowledge in the form of a 'reading list'. The subjects you choose (not too obscure or too broad) also presumably play a part on whether you get selected to audition.

As a more worthwhile 'challenge', I originally intended to choose subjects where I had an interest but only limited knowledge. However, with pressure on for the first round, I had to make a quick choice so opted for a subject where I was semi-confident. Wise decision, as the recording took place last July just days after the end of school term! I had ordered three 'set texts' (biographies by Charles Thompson, Michael Freedland and Richard Grudens - no time to tackle the exhaustive and masterful 'early life' by Gary Giddins!) With roughly three days to prepare, I had to start 'predicting' likely topics. Bing starred in over 60 full-length films, usually playing interchangeable versions of himself with names like Jeff or Jim, so decided I would (and could!) only memorise his roles in the more famous films or the 'character' parts that he played ... which paid off with the question on Bing's character name in the *Stagecoach* remake. I had watched that film decades before so no way I would have remembered otherwise.



Stagecoach

On the day of filming, the questions luckily fell just right. Roughly half of the 17 Crosby questions I got through in my two minutes would have been straightforward for any Bing fan (or for me a week earlier!) For the other half, I relied on my 'cramming'. Three of the questions (the name of Bing's boyhood neighbour, the church where he married Kathryn and the Leo Lynn question) I'd filed away under 'they'll-never-ask-that-but-just-in-case'. 'Firsts and lasts' also paid off with a question on Bing's final album. I'd registered the fact that he made the first ever recordings on Jack Kapp's new Decca label but had omitted to remember the names of the recordings in question (basically because I'd never heard of either song!)

Amazing (or unsurprising) how quickly you 'lose' a lot of that hastily crammed knowledge when the recording is over – all the hotels / cafes / cinemas in Spokane and California where Bing made his early appearances! But compliments to the question-setter on a really broad and interesting variety of questions, many of which were quite lengthy and included interesting 'nuggets' for the audience. At least the lengthy questions gave me a little bit of thinking time!

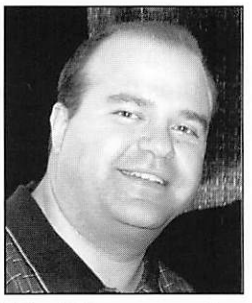
On the afternoon of the recording (which now takes place in the BBC's brand-new Manchester studios – a bit of a trek for us 'southerners'!) the audience were entertained amidst the checking of camera angles by Ted Robbins, a well-known 'warm-up man' on many TV shows. Amidst the to-and-fro with the quizmaster John Humphrys, he used the gag about the two of them having a dressing-room next to a troupe of female dancers. Ted recalled telling John about finding a hole in the dressing-room wall, to which John's apparent reply was 'Let them look'! I'm sure that I heard Bing and Bob Hope use a similar routine on one of the radio shows – proof that the 'banter' as well as the music is timeless. Many of today's radio presenters with their on-air badinage owe a massive debt to Crosby's legacy – I know that he mixed the spontaneous with the scripted but even today the good-natured banter between Bing and his fellow-stars is as fresh as the day it was recorded.

Talking of 'banter', I was initially relieved that contestants are no longer required to have a brief 'chat' with John Humphrys before the commencement of the General Knowledge round, but in retrospect it would have been a nice way of putting one's specialist choice into context. Being as my fellow-contestants chose an eclectic range of subjects (including the official executioner Albert Pierrepoint!) these insights definitely used to add an extra facet to the programme.

The next 'round' of Mastermind was recorded last September (transmission date still unknown). One is not allowed to return to earlier subjects (or even similar ones) so my next specialist round was on the Victorian Prime Minister Disraeli! Another hero (and another great 'showman') but hard to think of a greater contrast! Suffice it to say that as the competition gets tougher, nerves and concentration play as great a part as knowledge, so grateful that some of Bing's relaxed style was with me on the July recording at least!

Malcolm Sumner

How I Got This Way



By Regis Philbin, published by Harper Collins / IT Books (2011)

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Our honorary member Regis Philbin actually has several things in common with Bing Crosby. Both are instantly recognizable figures in the world of entertainment, and known nationwide by just their unique first names. Both are singers, concert performers, television headliners, and recording artists. Both can boast the longevity of having careers that lasted over half a century. Both are listed in the Guinness Book of World Records (Bing for having the world's oldest active fan club, and Regis for the most time spent in front of a television camera, some 17,000 hours).

And both can truthfully be said to have achieved legendary status in their respective fields. For the benefit of our members outside of the United States who may not be as familiar with Regis, he is most widely known for the daytime TV talk/variety show *Live! With Regis and Kathie Lee* and its subsequent incarnation *Live! With Regis and Kelly*; the TV game shows *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire,* which was a national phenomenon when it debuted in 1999; *Million Dollar Password*; and the first season of *America's Got Talent*. Regis is the proud recipient of five Emmy Awards, including a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, a Broadcasting & Cable Lifetime Achievement Award, the Walter Camp Distinguished American Award at Yale University, and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. In 2006 Regis was inducted into both the National Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame and the Television Academy's Hall of Fame.

Now in his 80th year, Regis has written his third memoir titled *How I Got This Way*. It contains thirty anecdote-filled chapters, each devoted to an individual he's met along the way that have helped shape his life and who he has become. An interesting concept for a book, and one that Bing himself was contemplating at the time of his untimely passing (he had envisioned chapters on friends both in and out of show business, from familiar names like Joe Venuti and Bob Hope, to those not so well known hunters, caddies, and businessmen he'd known).

How I Got This Way is filled with stories of lessons learned and elbows rubbed with extraordinary, and often unsuspecting, teachers: Jack Paar (the man Regis patterned his TV career after and dedicates this book to); Walter Winchell (whose mention of Regis in his legendary syndicated newspaper column put him on the map); Ronald Reagan; David Letterman; Donald Trump; George Clooney; Jack Nicholson; legendary Notre Dame coaches Frank Leahy, Ara Parseghian, and Lou Holtz; Dean Martin (Regis concedes that he listens to Martin each morning while working in his office, and indeed has somewhat of a shrine to Dino, including a life-size cardboard cut-out of him, and one of the famous black leather high-back stools Dean used on his famous 1965-74 NBC-TV variety show, given to him by the producer of *The Dean Martin Show*, Greg Garrison.); and, of course, longtime co-hosts Kathie Lee Gifford and Kelly Ripa; as well as his own lovely wife, Joy to name just a few.

And the reason I cannot recommend this book enough to our members—Regis devotes the entire very first chapter to none other than Bing Crosby! As a child in the 1930's growing up in the Bronx, every night at 9:30, Regis would sit by the radio in the family kitchen and listen to a half hour of Bing Crosby recordings played over the most powerful station in New York at the time, WNEW. As Regis said, "His voice was so clear, so pure, and so warm that after a while I thought of him as my good friend ... Bing Crosby remained a big deal to me—his mellow voice, his carefree persona, his very special aura. Dependable as could be, he was the friend who could always be counted on to make me feel better." All through high school and college, Regis' secret ambition was to be a singer like Bing.

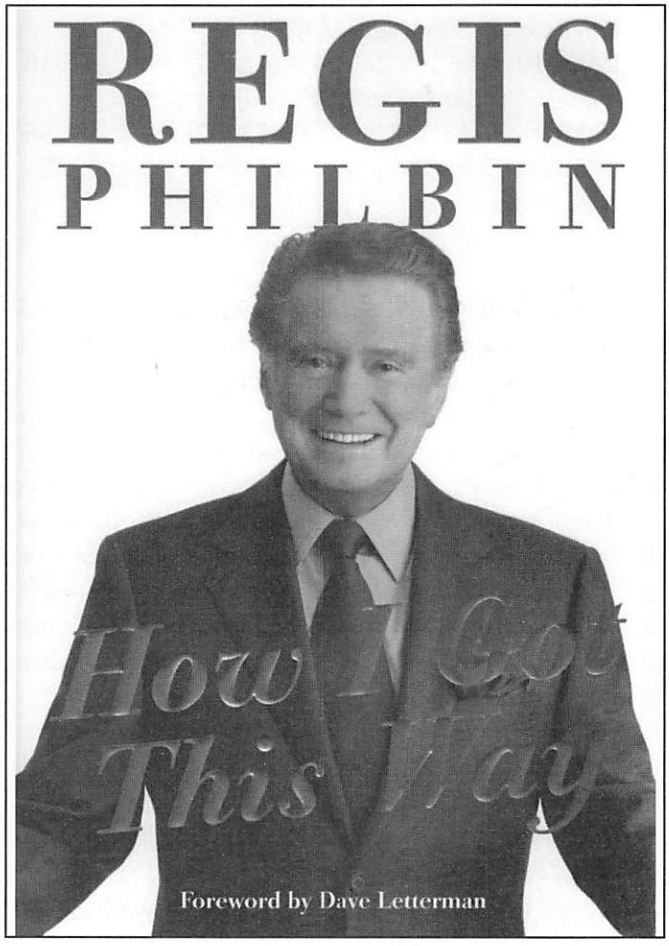
Fast forward almost thirty years. Regis is now appearing nightly as a side-kick / second banana to comedian Joey Bishop on his late night talk show, *The Joey Bishop Show*. This series ran opposite Johnny Carson's *Tonight* Show and, as a result of being pitted against the undisputed king of late-night TV, only lasted two years on the air. But during the first season, October 25, 1967 to be exact, the one and only Bing, along with his lovely wife Kathryn and 'road' co-star Dorothy Lamour, were booked as guests. Regis was beyond thrilled, and Bishop, knowing of his idolatry of Bing, persuaded the 'ol groaner to sing "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral" directly to Philbin. Being a University of Notre Dame alumni and staunch supporter, with their Notre Dame Fighting Irish football team, the Irish lullaby couldn't have been a more appropriate choice for Regis. Afterwards, Joey persuaded Regis to sing "Pennies from

Heaven" to Bing. As a result of this, his singing debut on TV, Regis was offered a recording contract by Mercury Records the very next day.

Within the chapter on Bing, Regis also recounts a visit to Spokane a few years ago, with stops at Bing's boyhood home, the former Clemmer (now Bing Crosby) Theater, and Gonzaga University. And he manages to drop a few ICC member names along the way; Gary Giddins, Martin McQuade, and yours truly.

On a personal note, I first came in contact with Regis back in 2005 through our mutual friend, the late Nick Perito, who served as music director for Perry Como for over 30 years, as well as working with Bing on a number of TV shows from 1969-77. Those who attended the Hofstra Conference on Bing in November of 2002 will no doubt remember him. Nick and I kept in touch often during the last ten years of his life (he passed away in August of 2005), via e-mail and phone calls back and forth every few weeks. Nick enjoyed our Saturday night chats, during which, as he put it, we'd "solve all the world's problems." Invariably, we'd inquire what each of us were doing or had planned, and during one of our calls in December of 2004, he mentioned he had a concert for Regis Philbin and actress Susan Lucci to conduct for the following month. As fate would have it, Martin McQuade and I were trading Crosby material back and forth at the time on audio and videotape, and I had his latest tape still sitting on my desk when Nick called. It was an audio tape of the aforementioned Joey Bishop Show with Bing as guest, complete as it aired. I mentioned this to Nick, and offered to send him a copy that he could pass on to Regis when he saw him at the venue. He thought it sounded like something Regis might want to have.

So I made a copy of the tape, and also made a CD of just the segments where Bing sings to Regis, and Regis sings to Bing. I mailed them off to Nick, and promptly forgot about it, never imagining such a busy guy like Regis would ever get around to listening to it. I soon learned to never underestimate Regis Philbin! One day at work in February of 2005, my boss came out to the tool-room to tell me I had a phone call. There on the other end of the line was Regis himself, thanking a shocked and stunned me profusely for sending him that CD. I honestly can't remember what I said to him during our brief exchange, other than 'glad you like it' and 'thanks for calling', but I do know he certainly made my day! Afterwards, I went in and asked my boss if he knew who called me. He didn't. When I told him, he said, "I thought that voice sounded familiar!"



It should be pointed out that, until the time he received the CD and tape from me, almost forty years after it aired, Regis hadn't seen, nor heard, the Joey Bishop Show on which his idol Bing appeared. The original quad video master tape has long since been erased over and reused, a common practice back then due to the high cost of the tape stock. So the audio tape I received from Martin McQuade may very well be the ONLY surviving recording of Regis' momentous meeting with Bing.

Regis and I have kept in touch sporadically during the ensuing years, via the U.S. Postal Service. He always sends me handwritten letters, even addressing the envelopes himself, which, in this age of computers, faxes, and e-mails, is such a refreshing change. In the interim, I worked with Wig and Malcolm to secure an honorary membership for Regis, which took a few years to finally come to fruition. Just this past October 25th, I received another surprise from Regis. We hadn't spoken on the phone since that initial call back in 2005, but here, once again at work, only this time checking voicemails on my cell phone, comes that familiar voice, saying, "Hello, Greg? An old friend of yours calling, Regis

Philbin." Alas, I missed his call, but as a consolation, he left me the greatest phone message I've ever received! Thankfully he called me back on November 1st and we had a nice chat. He immediately praised BING magazine, saying he enjoys reading what we put together each issue and complimented us on the high quality of the publication itself. He then told me about his forthcoming book and asked if we could put a mention in this magazine about it. Unfortunately by that time, the winter issue was already at the printers, so the "mention" had to wait until now. I hope it proves to be worth the wait for him.

Since the book was released on November 15, in addition to a book signing tour, Regis has done a number of media interviews to promote it, and invariably, talk always turns to "our man" Bing, which is always nice to hear. On the evening of November 17th, the day before he stepped down as host of *Live! With Regis and Kelly* after twenty-eight years, Katie Couric hosted an hour-long prime-time special devoted to Regis on ABC-TV, during which he told Couric what Bing meant to him. She queried him on what were some of the songs he heard on WNEW all those years prior, and Regis responded by singing a few lines of "Pennies from Heaven", which faded back to Bing's original 1936 recording of the song. Couric closed the hour, very appropriately, with Bing singing '... and THANK YOU, so much', the last line of Bing's beautiful 1956 recording of "Thanks for the Memory". On November 25th, Brooke Baldwin interviewed Regis on CNN, and persuaded him to sing along with a film clip of Bing performing the title song from the 1936 film *Pennies from Heaven*, which made for a nice 'virtual' duet. We cannot thank Regis enough for all of the positive publicity he has brought to Bing within the past few months.

Regis is the 'real-deal'. Nick Perito told me whenever anyone would ask him what Perry Como was like off-stage, he would always borrow a line from comedian Flip Wilson; 'what you see is what you get.' The same can be said about Regis Philbin. On camera and off, he is devoid of ego, can easily converse with and relate to just about everyone he comes in contact with and make that person feel special and important. That may be part of the secret of his success and longevity in show business, and why viewers have welcomed him into their homes for fifty years. And no doubt will continue to do so for as long as he wants us to.

Greg Van Beek

My Christmas Sled

Regis returned as the special guest host of "Bing Crosby Christmas Radio," on SiriusXM in December. He read extracts from his new book and he also read this memoir from Bing which was originally included in *Christmas With Ed Sullivan* (© 1959 by Ed Sullivan, McGraw-Hill Book Company).

I can look back over a long list of Christmases . . . not, as Bob Hope would lead people to believe, going back to Valley Forge . . . but long enough. One Christmas above all others stands out in my memory . . .

I was thirteen. We lived in Spokane, Washington, where a white Christmas is standard, and where skating and sledding were the big joys for the youngsters in those days . . .

Now, if a fella had a "Flexible Flyer" with steel hollow-groove runners, footrests, and mechanical steering, he could ask the "village belle" to go up to Ledgerwood Hill and spend the day sledding. My eye was on the girl, and my heart was set on the sled. In the few weeks before Christmas, I worked harder than ever at selling newspapers to earn enough money to buy that sled, but I didn't quite make it. I was a few bucks short, but a few bucks in those days came hard. It was a blue Christmas Eve for me that long-ago night in Spokane.

Under the tree for me on Christmas morning was a shiny "Flexible Flyer" with the red, white, and blue eagle on the centerboard. I looked at my dad, my eyes filled with gratitude.

"How did you know what I wanted?" I asked.

"I have ways," he smiled mysteriously, and as I now know, fathers do.

I think my sled was the only "F. F." standing in front of St. Aloysius Church that morning. I proudly parked it right next to a Maxwell, a Franklin, a Stevens Duryea, and a couple of Model Ts. Afterwards I stood impatiently at the church door with my dad, as he chatted with the priest. I glanced in the direction of the parking area and saw a group of teenagers huddled around the spot where I had put my sled. My heart skipped a beat. I had a horrible thought that one of the cars had run over the sled and that my friends were examining the ruins. I flew down the church steps two at a time. When I reached the group I heard oohs and aahs. There was my sled, just as bright and shiny as ever, and in one whole beautiful piece. I heaved a sigh of relief, contacted my secret love, invited her to go sleigh riding with me, and then we were on our way.

It was a clear crisp December day, and I had the cutest girl and surely the slickest sled on the hill. It was the type of Christmas scene you would expect to see on one of Grandma Moses' paintings.

A big bonfire was blazing on the side of the hill. One of the other kids, Herbie Rotchford, had filched a dozen potatoes from the family root cellar for roasting in the hot ashes. I traded him two rides on my Double F for six Murphys and, believe me, they tasted even better than *pommes de terre a la maison* at the Tour d'Argent in Paris.

As darkness approached, we spied a coal truck on its way back to town. We flagged it, and then hooked onto that stout rear axle in a long procession of sleds. All the

way home we sang, laughed, and pelted one another with snowballs.

I have traveled many different "Roads" in my motion picture career but that road up Ledgerwood Hill brings to my mind the sweetest memories of all.

Bing Crosby

Terry Fator and Bing

Best known for his victory on "America's Got Talent," Terry Fator captured the hearts…and funny bones…of America in 2007 with his unique combination of celebrity impressions and unparalleled ventriloquism. In December he presented his show *A Very Terry Christmas* at The Mirage Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas.

Mike Weatherford of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* posted his review of the show on December 9 and we reproduce extracts here.

****

The Grinch and Charlie Brown are handed down from the TV Christmas of one generation to the next, but you have to be a boomer of a certain age to remember the doorbell.

Were you a child of Andy Williams or Bing Crosby, all sweater-clad in their TV living room when — ring! — they answered to door to reveal their real off-camera family or a very special guest?

Terry Fator sure was.

"Since the day that those old specials went the way of the dodo bird, I've always wanted to bring them back," the 46-year-old says offstage of "A Very Terry Christmas," his limited-run Christmas redecorating of his usual vehicle at The Mirage.

Terry Fator with his Bing puppet

And bring them back he does, distilling the essence of those memories into a showcase that plays right to his strengths. What is a ventriloquist anyway, if not a one-man host to a visiting cast of wacky characters?

And who else could perform their own Christmas mixtape, mimicking everything from "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch" to Wham!'s irksome '80s-synthesizer ditty "Last Christmas"? And sounding like both George Michael and Thurl "Tony the Tiger" Ravenscroft?

Fator has made a real effort here, changing the material for his regular puppets and adding a couple of new ones: a Vegas lounge crooner and none other than Bing Crosby himself.

"It didn't feel like Christmas until I was sitting in front of the TV when I was a kid, watching Bing Crosby and his family have these guests," Fator says of a tribute that includes the living room set and his knockout wife and stage assistant, Taylor Makakoa, carting out plates of goodies in her apron and best June Cleaver pearls. And yes, the doorbell — at least the timing of the sound effect — becomes a running gag.

As a repeat viewer, I liked the Christmas show better than the regular one. Beyond the general warm fuzziness, Fator doesn't feel the need to "introduce" each puppet and repeat jokes to establish each character. If this is your introduction, you might be asking, "Who is the little guy in the Easter Bunny outfit who talks like a stoner?" But it's not rocket science.

Another advantage over the workaday show is the buffet for closet Christmas music freaks (someone must listen to those radio stations that switch to Christmas music all month; just don't expect us to admit it).

Fator's puppets give him enough range to work in about every Christmas song you can think of, plus Adam Sandler's "The Chanukah Song." A Beatles puppet serves up Paul McCartney's "Wonderful Christmas Time" (another '80s synth abuser) before announcing, "That was one of the crappiest Christmas songs ever written. Here's a better one." Which would be John Lennon's "Happy Xmas (War is Over)."

The lounge crooner drew audience applause for a dead-on imitation of Dean Martin's stirred, not shaken "Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer." (Could we see him soon in the regular show?) But the naturally high tenor of Fator's singing voice kept his Bing Crosby a "nice try." And it takes a show such as this one to make you realize Karen Carpenter's voice was even lower than Der Bingle's.

But Fator is building a tradition here. You would do well to ring the bell, especially during a time on the Strip when most headliners ring and run.

Mike Weatherford

How Bing Crosby's Voice Went from Revolutionary to Retro

This intriguing heading on the Slate.com site on December 21 led into an article by David Haglund.

Earlier today, Slate's Emily Yoffe, who is best known for answering questions—she writes the "Dear

Prudence" column—had one of her own, which she emailed to her colleagues:

Driving around this time of year one hears a lot of Bing Crosby, a voice you otherwise almost never hear. Within one note I know it's Crosby and my overwhelming feeling on hearing him is how old-fashioned he sounds. However, I know his style of singing once revolutionized music. I'd love someone to explain what Bing Crosby did to change singing and why he now sounds so dated.

Happily, one of our colleagues here at Slate, music critic Jody Rosen, literally wrote the book on "White Christmas," the holiday song with which Crosby is most closely associated. Rosen took a few minutes to explain both what was radical about Crosby's style in his own time and why it sounds so retro today—which are, it turns out, the same thing.

"I think what sounds old-fashioned to you is the very thing that made Crosby revolutionary: the sotto voce, conversational, 'crooning' style that he brought to popular music by mastering the microphone, a new technology in the late '20s and early '30s," Rosen explained.

Before the crooners—before the advent of electrical recording and the microphone—pop was dominated by vaudeville belters, like Al Jolson, who performed unamplified and had to shout-down-the-rafters to be heard. Crosby et al made pop more intimate; they also domesticated it (the radio/record player became the new venue, as opposed to the stage) and de-ethnicized it (no more leather-lunged Jewish schmaltz-merchants or blackface "coon shouters").

Also notable in Crosby's delivery, Rosen said, was his "long legato phrasing," though Crosby "didn't totally refrain from vibrato: another of Crosby's signatures was the 'mordent'—a warble or trill that comes out of the Irish tenor tradition and Victorian parlor singing, which he deployed strategically, especially in ballads." And he wasn't the only one: Rosen pointed to Fred Astaire and Rudy Vallee as other employers of this technique. "But Crosby was a genius, they weren't."

Still, there is a less technical reason Crosby's records so vividly evoke the past, according to Rosen: "I think what sounds most old-fashioned about his records are the old songs themselves." For comparison's sake, Rosen pointed to "the current Billboard #1 album by Michael Bublé. That," he said, "sounds old-fashioned, too."

David Haglund

George Harrison, Bix and Bing!

George Harrison developed an interest in Bing in the 1980s. On a nationally-syndicated radio show, *Breakfast with the Beatles*, Harrison remarked, "Bing Crosby was someone I discovered in my gardening period. He had a lovely voice, a presence that sort of crackles. He always remained popular over here [i.e. England]. I like his stuff very much." According to Harrison's son, Dhani, quoted in the October 2002 issue of "Beatles Monthly" magazine, an album of recordings by Bix Beiderbecke and Bing (Bix 'n' Bing) was his dad's favorite in his later years. Make of this what you will: the Beatles loved melodies . . . ! I find it cheering news that more people love this music.

Michael Steinman

(Courtesy of the ToNY group, emceed by Will Friedwald and staffed by people who discover unusual facts)

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gord Atkinson, 14 Castle Harbour Crt., Ottawa, ON K2S 1B9, Canada.

Gord's *The Crosby Years* series of CDs remains available direct from him. US members can obtain the CDs for $18.00 US each which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $18.00 for each CD. Payment can be made by check or money order to Gord Atkinson. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £11 each.

John Byron, 110 Chestnut Grove, Castlebar, Co. Mayo, Ireland.

John seeks on DVD or VHS, Bing's films - The Country Girl, Man On Fire and Dr Cook's Garden.

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

Michael has a supply of the book "Alternate Bing Crosby" by Colin Pugh which was published in 1988. Running to 159 pages, it gives details of the many alternate takes Bing made. If you would like a copy, send £3.50 to Michael Crampton. Europe and Ireland members should send £4.50. Also Michael has many spare copies of old issues of BING magazine and please contact him if you would like to pick some up for a nominal figure. There are still some copies left of the excellent book covering Bing's TV appearances and Michael is offering these at the hugely discounted price of only £5.99 including postage.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com – website: www.fesfilms.com/)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your NTSC requirements for Bing on DVD and video.

The Record Centre, 43, Presthope Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4NJ, UK (Tel: 0121-476-9619 [Tues/Wed & Fridays: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. only],
e-mail: Raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Mail Order only. Free lists available by email. Ray Purslow has always been a real supporter of the Crosby cause and for your Bing CDs, please contact Ray.

Lars Schinnerling, Forstring 172, 63225 Langen, Germany (email: lschinnerling@gmx.net)

WANTED: Copies of the following radio shows:

(1) 30 Aug 42: Bureau of Public Relations Washington Show, MC: Bing Crosby
(2) 17 Jan 44: Let's All Back The Attack, 1 hour show to promote the 4th War Loan
(3) 4 Jul 44: L.A. Times War Bond Show with Bing, Ginny Simms & James Melton-
Preferably on CD or cassette tape.

FOR SALE: GINNY SIMMS Discography: Covers her commercial recordings, movie and radio work (including almost 20 apperances by Bing). The spiral-bound A4 book has more than 100pp and is fully illustrated with many rare photos, sheet music, and lobby cards. A must for lovers of pop music of the 40s! Airmail delivery worldwide for only GBP15 or US$25.

GINNY SIMMS
An Illustrated Discography of Records, Radio Programs, and Movies
Ginny Simms at the height of her career, 1944
Copyright © 2012 by Lars Schinnerling
All rights reserved. No portion of this discography may be reproduced, by any process or technique, without the express written consent of the publisher
Contact: Simmsfan@gmx.net

Mike Springthorpe, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, UK (email: springthorpem@aol.co.uk - Tel: 0770-4861133)

"I hope I can be of some help to Bing Crosby fans. My father-in-law and his best friend Bob (both of whom have sadly passed away) were life long Bing Crosby fans and collected their vinyl records and tapes over many years. When they died the collection was passed on to my wife and myself.

This is just not our kind of music and is just sitting in the corner not being played. We would much rather it goes to people who still appreciate such a great artist and we would be very happy to donate it to your organisation. I haven't counted them exactly but there are approx 60 LP's and about 100 cassette tapes accumulated over about 60 years. I cannot vouch for the quality of all of them but I imagine there might be some rare tracks. We live in Leighton Buzzard, near Milton Keynes and if one of your members lives locally we would be pleased if he would be able to collect the records and tapes."

Linda Wallis, Ealing, London, UK (email: lwallis15@btinternet.com - Tel: 0778-8841191)

"I have the following Bing Crosby LP's that I am willing to donate to anyone of your members who would like them. I am happy to donate them at no cost, apart from the postage. I live in Ealing, West London, so if there are any members who wish to collect, that is also an option.
Bing and The Andrews Sisters Volume 1
Bing and The Andrews Sisters Volume 2
Bing and The Andrews Sisters Volume 3
Crosby Classics
I Love You Truly
I'll Sing You a Song of the Islands
Rhythm on the Range
Sing-A-Long with Bing
Songs I Wish I Had Sung"

Worlds Records, P. O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94947, USA (phone: 1-800-742-6663) www.worldsrecords.com/

Try this company for CDs imported from the UK and elsewhere.

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Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia. (tel. [03] 9755 3013 – email: abcsoc@dodo.com)

The Society has been running for 35 years having originally been formed by the late Bob Machliss. Bi-monthly newsletters are issued and there are regular film nights. In December, the colorised version of *Holiday Inn* was shown supported by the TV special *Bing Crosby and the Sounds of Christmas* from December 14, 1972. The February film night had *Welcome Stranger* as the main attraction along with a Dean Martin show and a Vitaphone short featuring Baby Rose Marie. Film nights are also scheduled for 16 April, 18 June, 20 August, 15 October and 3 December. The venue has changed this year and is now in the Library behind the Collingwood Town Hall complex at 11 Stanton St., Abbotsford, Melbourne.

Internet sites:

www.BingCrosby.com

This comes under the Bing Crosby Enterprises banner and contains rare photos of Bing, radio shows, recordings and clips from Bing's films. The site has some superb material on it, particularly in the video and audio archives, and it is well worth devoting some time to it.

Bing Crosby on Facebook

This also comes under the auspices of Bing Crosby Enterprises and Bing's Facebook page is at:

www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

Information taken from the book *Bing Crosby: Day By Day* is posted frequently. There is also a discussion facility.

YouTube

Bing Crosby Enterprises has its own channel at YouTube with many Bing videos in evidence. Go to:

http://www.youtube.com/user/BingCrosbyEnterprise

BING magazine

This site contains a considerable amount of reference material and Frans van der Kolff's incredible "Songography" and Keith Parkinson's magnificent "The A-Z of Bing's Movies" can be accessed. See www.bingmagazine.co.uk

A Bing Crosby Discography

Maintained by our member, J. Richard Baker (known as Jarbie), this excellent site can be found at:

http://tinyurl.com/BingCrosbyDiscography

Crosby Fan World

This bulletin board type site is at:
http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/
Mature and knowledgeable contributions are being made and the site is sensibly moderated by Richard Baker. If you have any Bing news please consider making an entry on the site and if there are any Crosby matters you want to discuss, this is an ideal place to do so.

Jon Oye's Blog

Jon has his own first-class blog with several pages about Bing showing many rare items from his collection. Go to: http://derbingle.blogspot.com/

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, Flat 9, Milchester House, 12 Staveley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7JX, UK, (Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1323 412698) website: www.intuneinternational.com)

Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent monthly periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, e-mail: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Nat King Cole International Fan Club, c/o Roy Holmes, 18 Rutland Drive, Morden, Surrey SM4 5QH, UK (phone: 020-8648-8858, web page:

www.highstreets.co.uk/kcc/index.shtml)

King Cole Comments is the club's newsletter and this is issued three times each year. For a free copy, please send a SAE to Roy Holmes.

Friends of Doris Day, c/o Dr. Sue Gökgör, 71 East Avenue, Oxford OX4 1XR, UK. eMail: suegokgor@aol.com.

Started in 1997, The Friends of Doris Day is an international Doris Day appreciation club based in Oxford, UK - and the only Doris Day fan club in the UK. The club publishes three 32 page magazines a year, packed full of articles and information you won't find anywhere else, including memorabilia signed by Doris herself for auction or sale. Subscription is £16 for UK members, £21 (or equivalent in Euro or US$) for Europe, £22 (or equivalent in US$) for other countries.

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Justin Clarke, 21 Main Rd., Wetley Rocks, Stoke-On-Trent, ST9 0BH, UK (phone: 01782 551103).

Dick Haymes Society, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler St., NE Minneapolis, MN 55418, USA, or Maurice Dunn, 16 Cradley Park Road, Netherton, Dudley West Midlands, DY2 9SR, UK

(Web site: www.dickhaymes.com/dhsociety/index.html)

A half-yearly newsletter is produced.

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (e-mail: JWWehrman@aol.com - web site: www.jolson.org)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com ,

website: http://homepages.tesco.net/flias/)

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-899771).

A quarterly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the UK are £15 a year; £19 for European membership and £23 for the rest of the world. Ken Barnes, who made those great albums with Bing in the 70s, is now Honorary President.

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 003531 8212418).

Meetings take place at 8:00 pm, second Monday of every month in the Tara Towers Hotel, Dublin 4.

International Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK

The club has been running since 1967 and membership costs £6.50 (UK), £7.50 (Europe) and $15 (USA). A quarterly newsletter is issued.

Books 'n' Bing

Martin McQuade has been doing some more reading and he has a lot to tell us.

1. Raoul Walsh: The True Story of Hollywood's Legendary Director by Marilyn Ann Moss, published by The University Press of Kentucky, 2011; Hardback $32.88 (Amazon USA), 528 pages, ISBN-10: 0813133939, ISBN-13: 978-0813133935.

This new book relates the making of *Going Hollywood.* Ed Hatrick, William Randolph Hearst's representative, met in late summer 1933 with Walsh to discuss a film which would co-star Hearst's mistress, Marion Davies with Bing. Hearst wanted to rescue Davies from her recent spate of box office clinkers. Frances Marion, the renowned screenwriter who had directed several of Davies' films, wrote a treatment called *Paid to Laugh.* Hearst's production company, Cosmopolitan Pictures, hired the promising young playwright Donald Ogden Stewart to turn this into a screenplay. Initially, Hearst was opposed to Bing's involvement, despite Walsh being an avid fan. "Word had it that the newspaper magnate was no fan of Crosby's singing style. Probably closer to the truth is that Hearst was jealous of Crosby and considered him a 'womanizing' hellraiser.'" Lyricist Arthur Freed intervened, "mostly because Freed, along with Nacio Herb Brown, had written six songs for the picture…which he believed only Crosby could put over."

Walsh voiced his opinions regarding casting. For instance, despite his discreetly maintained affair with Fifi D'Orsay, he wanted her to play Davies' rival. Davies backed Walsh, but Hearst was at odds with her, preferring Lily Damita. Walsh also became well acquainted with Hearst and Davies, and attended many of their legendary parties. He recalled in his autobiography that when he was first asked to direct, he was told that "The Chief" wanted a meeting. Walsh responded, "the chief of what?" Walsh got his answer when Hearst flew him, along with Bing and members of the crew, to San Simeon. This would be the first of many visits. During one dinner at the palatial estate Davies, who was born in Brooklyn, asked her fellow New Yorker if he had ever been to Rockaway Beach. "When he said yes, she dubbed him 'Rockaway Raoul.'" Hence, Bing's famous ditty, performed at the San Simeon wrap party. "Crosby told cast and crew that he and the film's musical director, Arthur Freed, had written a song for Walsh to the melody of "The Bowery" to make it all the more personal, since Walsh had just completed *The Bowery* for Fox.. Actually, only a fraction of the melody references that song. "Crosby…later recorded it just for Walsh." His risqué lyrics are reprinted herein.

Raoul Walsh chats with Marion Davies and Bing.

The shoot on the MGM lot lasted three months. For the exteriors, Walsh's own backyard on Petit Drive was used. Hearst alienated the studio top brass with his barely concealed disdain for Norma Shearer, wife of head-of-production, Irving Thalberg. "The production could be called a *fiasco with fun*. Davies often didn't know her lines when she walked onto the set, which was just before noon." This behavior would keep early birds Walsh and Crosby impatiently waiting. Davies' eventual entrance would be heralded by a five-piece band, which regularly soothed her in-between her scenes.

The front office took the aforementioned ditty all too literally, concluding that Walsh and company had been goofing off. Regardless of the fact that Hearst financed the picture, Louis B. Mayer was enraged. "Walsh later claimed that neither he nor Crosby were ever again invited back to make a picture there – which is not the case." *Going Hollywood* opened in time for Christmas, 1933. "The critics loved it. One said, 'Mr. Walsh has evolved a joyful, tuneful, often satirical essay on the types he cleverly directed.'" Thus is told a saga of the extravagant and debauched heyday of Hollywood.

2. Myrna Loy: The Only Good Girl in Hollywood by Emily W. Leider (University of California Press; 2011) touches on the star's 1936 marriage to Paramount producer Arthur Hornblow, Jr. who had supervised *Mississippi* in 1935. The author mentions that the production suffered due to the fact that "Bing Crosby kept disappearing from the set" and that

W.C. Fields felt "genuine disdain" towards Hornblow. Loy divorced Hornblow in 1942 and six day later, on "the rebound," married John David Hertz, Jr., son of the car - rental magnate. When this union dissolved two years hence, "footloose" Myrna rented a bungalow where, based on an August 2, 1944 report in The Los Angeles Times, "she hosted many weekend parties at which Bing Crosby might drop by after a round of golf and sing a tune, accompanied by Hoagy Carmichael at the piano." Loy would soon co-star with Carmichael in *The Best Years of Our Lives.*

3. Spencer Tracy: A Biography

Loy's occasional co-star is the subject of *Spencer Tracy: A Biography* by James Curtis (Alfred A. Knopf; 2011) which informs us that during the filming of *The Power and the Glory* in 1933, the actor was rescued from one of his customary benders by his friend Bing. This cryptic anecdote, recalled by that film's leading lady Colleen Moore, precedes by thirty years (and several hundred pages) another Bing reference. In May, 1962 Tracy recorded in Palm Springs the linking narration track for *How the West Was Won*, filmed in the widescreen process Cinerama. Bing was the first choice for this task. Perhaps he declined in deference to Tracy. (Bing would narrate *Cinerama's Russian Adventure* in 1966.) A footnote indicates Tracy was originally slated to appear on the screen – times three.

**Tracy had withdrawn from How the West Was Won when the shooting of the [John] Ford sequence conflicted with location work on Judgment at Nuremberg. His continued involvement with the film was due principally to Bing Crosby having earmarked his cut of the picture – reportedly 10 percent of the world gross – for the building of a new wing at St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica. (Crosby's company had produced the record album on which the film was based.) Irene Dunne* [whom we learn joined Bing on a "Hollywood for Wilkie" committee in 1940] *headed the hospital's auxiliary committee, and was instrumental in assembling the all – star cast.* This is attributed to an article entitled "The Script and the Casting" which appeared in *The New York Times* on November 17, 1963. Mention should be made that the 1959 Project Records issue had, in turn, been inspired by the recent *Life Magazine* series with the same title for which Bing had secured the rights.

If memory serves, Bing got Gregory Peck to join the roster as a result of a golf wager.

My research uncovered an October 5, 1960 report by Hedda Hopper that Bing and Irene Dunne were initially slated for roles. Further investigation revealed recollections shared by Henry Hathaway, another director of the film, with Greg Kimble for his article, "How the West Was Won – in Cinerama" published in the October, 1983 issue of *American Cinematographer* magazine. "They asked Bing Crosby if he would do a television show on the record album he had released. It became too expensive, so it was offered to Sol Siegel, [*High Society*] who had been looking for a story to do in Cinerama. Crosby sold the rights, and assigned his profit participation to St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica...Everyone on the crew worked for half salary. The top price for actors was $25,000.00." Indeed, the film evolved into a quasi-musical, with its soundtrack including several songs used in Bing's survey of our American folk music heritage. In addition, material was especially adapted by Johnny Mercer. Sammy Cahn and Robert Emmett Dolan composed a "Greensleeves" variation, "Home in the Meadow," which Bing recorded in 1964 while the epic was still enjoying road show engagements. Consequently, although Bing didn't appear on movie screens in 1963, he was directly responsible for the second-highest grossing blockbuster (after *Cleopatra*) of that year.

(Editor: For further information about "How the West Was Won", see the article on page 29)

4. Robert Redford: The Biography by Michael Feeney Callan (Knopf; 2011) provides another glimpse into Bing's behind-the-scenes screen activities during the early sixties. The book recounts the actor's resistance to repeated blandishments from Bing Crosby Productions once he received an Emmy nomination for "The Voice of Charley Pont," broadcast on October 25, 1962 on *Alcoa Premiere*. The company wanted Redford to star in a new series *The Breaking Point,* which would take their top rated doctor program *Ben Casey* to a new dramatic level by depicting the generational conflict in a psychiatric clinic. Since Bing had personally selected Vince Edwards to portray Casey, it is likely that he was actively involved with this offer. Redford declined. He explained his reasoning to the author. "Then the honey trap opens. The seductive talk starts. This would be groundbreaking drama, all about a psychiatrist running group therapy sessions. I would be the star counselor. I thought about that. I was twenty-four years old. I was supposed to be counseling sick people?" His agent Arthur Park plied his persuasions, telling the actor, "Kid, I've been a lifetime in the business, so let me put you straight. Movies are great, but forget about them. They pay television stars in the top guest slots $3,500.00. *They want to pay you $3,750.00 a week, for thirteen weeks.* Nobody your age is getting that. Take it." Once the prize grew to an unprecedented six grand, the struggling, aspiring movie – star took a long walk along the Malibu beach to contend with his professional dilemma, which only deepened upon his return. Park informed him, "While you were playing *Hamlet* on the beach, kid, Bing Crosby Productions upped the offer to $10,000.00 a week. I'm doing this job thirty years. Don't throw this back in my face. Let me retire with this under my belt."

Suddenly Redford had an epiphany. "Coming back

from the beach, I was at the point of saying *maybe*, but that decided it. I told Arthur, 'The offer is great, because it makes it easy for me. Let them offer me twenty thousand, or thirty, or forty. It just makes it easier to say no.'" Although Redford's *Breaking Point* was never reached, apparently Paul Richards' was. He appeared, along with Eduard Franz, on the short-lived ABC series during the 1963-64 season. Bing was also turned down by Redford's future co-star Barbra Streisand when he asked her to be his guest on an upcoming special after her sensational August, 1963 engagement at a location familiar to him: The Cocoanut Grove. Her schedule was just too busy, although she had just accepted Bob Hope's offer. This is derived from *Barbra: The Way She Is* by Christopher Andersen (Morrow; 2006)

5. The Unconscious Actor

Actor Darryl Hickman expresses his thanks to his mentor in his memoir, *The Unconscious Actor* (Small Mountain Press; 2007). "By the age of seven I was at home on a film set, but I still didn't know – or care – where the camera was. Bing Crosby, who took me under his wing in *The Star Maker,* [1939] would say to the director, [Roy Del Ruth] 'Can't we give Darryl a line here?' When I'd been given extra dialogue, he would turn me towards the camera with the admonition, 'The camera's over here. Say your line to the camera.' Bing's nickname for me was *Yes-sir-ee*, from a line in my audition song, *Franklin D. Roosevelt Jones.* While we were rehearsing the numbers for *The Star Maker*, Y. Frank Freeman, the head of the studio, and other big-wigs at Paramount would come by to visit Bing in the rehearsal hall, and he would inevitably call me over to sing my song for the visitors. 'C'mon, *Yes-sir-ee,* do your stuff.' Everybody cracked up, and nobody clapped louder than Bing."

"Nonetheless, it came as a surprise when Bing approached my mother at the end of the shoot. He said, 'Mrs. Hickman, I know *Yes-sir-ee* doesn't have an agent, and if you don't mind, I'd like to call my brother and set up a meeting for you. Everett Crosby ran one of the most prestigious talent agencies in Hollywood. 'Why…no…I don't mind…at all,' she stammered. And a week later we were both sitting across from the other Mr. Crosby in his opulent office on the Sunset Strip. He looked down from what seemed like a throne, starring at me for a moment before he spoke. 'I don't know who you are, Darryl Hickman, but if Bing says I should handle you, I'm going to handle you.' With these words, I was granted credibility in the motion picture industry."

Everett landed for Hickman the role of Winfield Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath.* "I have always been grateful for the experience. With Bing in *The Star Maker* I had been taught to perform. With Winfield Joad I was required to act. In little more than a year…I had gone from a pint-sized song-and-dance man to a serious actor, solely dependent on unconscious forces to get me through. Crosby, the consummate performance artist, had shown me the way: be yourself, have a good time, and reach out to the audience through the camera." Hickman remains astonished that he honed his talent under the tutelage of "no ego, no higher status, no bloated self-image …players of stature such as Crosby, Fonda, Tracy, Hepburn, Gable and Wayne…teaching me the same lesson for more than two decades. A cast of professional actors is, from star to bit player, a true democracy, each individual equal to his or her fellow players: interdependent, openhearted, a member of the team." Thereby Hickman, who achieved wide TV fame with *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis* (1959-63), succinctly defines the Crosby creed.

6. That Old Black Magic

The illustrious career of another artist who benefited from an early appearance in a Bing movie is chronicled in *That Old Black Magic: Louis Prima, Keely Smith and The Golden Age of Las Vegas* by Tom Clavin (Chicago Review Press; 2010). Prima's skills as a singer and trumpet player were showcased in 1936 in *Rhythm on the Range.*

Louis Prima (seated with trumpet) watches Bing and Martha Raye sing "I'm an Old Cowhand".

The year before Prima composed his signature song which originated during his racetrack outings with Bing. "Every time Bing picked a horse in a race, for luck he'd sing its name, getting louder as the race went on. Prima urged him on by shouting, 'Sing, Bing, sing.' That kept going through his head and it evolved into the song, "Sing, Sing, Sing." In 1953 Prima would again cross

paths with his friend when Wilbur Clark hosted at his *Desert Inn* the first nationally televised *Tournament of Champions*, "allowing people around the nation to see Bing Crosby and Bob Hope and other celebrities jousting on the golf course, enhancing Las Vegas' reputation as a playground."

7. Lady Blue Eyes: My Life with Frank

In *Lady Blue Eyes: My Life with Frank* by Barbara Sinatra (Crown Archetype; 2011) the author clearly states her bobby sox loyalties. "Bing Crosby may have been the most popular vocalist of the day, but Frank was younger and far more handsome, with his sharp cheekbones and megawatt smile. Unlike Bing, he had a full head of hair that fell down endearing over his face."

Many years later Frank, now also minus some strands, guided her on a nostalgic tour which produced this preposterous anecdote. "One year he took me on a rare visit to Hoboken. At the Hoboken jail, he told me a story that made me laugh out loud. The singing hero of Frank's childhood had been Bing...so when Bing was arrested for being drunk in his neighborhood, Frank couldn't believe his luck. He hurried over to the jailhouse, which had its cells in the basement, their windows at street level. Getting down on all fours, Frank peered in at his incarcerated idol desperate to talk to him, sing for him, or get any professional help he could. Sadly, poor Bing was so loaded he could barely respond and yelled at 'the kid' to go away. Frank ribbed Bing about that for years later when they became buddies in Palm Springs." Barbara reveals that in later years, Frank was disappointed when the early-to-bed Bing would not endure his late night drinking parties.

An amusing recollection is shared regarding a meeting with HSH Prince Rainier of Monaco, to whom Frank confided that "he was most indignant when Grace was presented with a platinum record for a song before he received one...for *True Love*, of all things." HSH added the *coup de Grace*. "Worse still, she sang it with Crosby!"

According to Barbara, One of Bing's trademark habits had a lasting impact on Frank. "He not only chain-smoked cigarettes but enjoyed cigars and the occasional pipe – a throwback to his admiration for Bing Crosby, I always thought." The book covers familiar ground, such as the rage Frank felt when President Kennedy decided to cancel his trip to his house in Palm Springs in favor of Bing's compound. "When his friend and JFK's brother-in-law Peter Lawford told him the news he cut Peter off there and then and never spoke to him again. Holding a grudge, Italian style, was yet another side of the elusive, enigmatic Frank Sinatra." Barbara provides testimony to a special friendship with this excerpt from a letter which "Old Dad" sent when "Old Blue Eyes" was once contemplating retirement. "I can't believe you're going to remain supine for long. You're at the peak of your form and you still have so much to give." Barbara reflects, "When Frank quoted me letters like that, I wondered if he was reconsidering his decision or privately dreading a future without performing."

8. Diaries

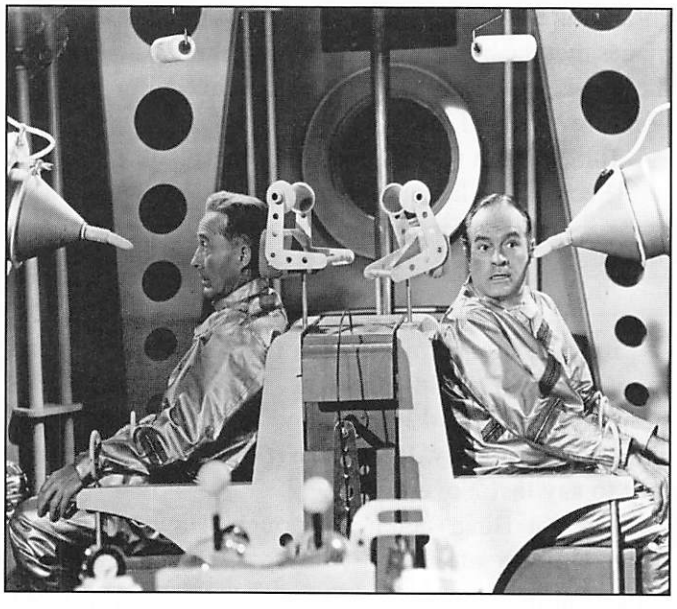
Noel Coward, who performed his legendary cabaret act at *The Desert Inn* in 1955, reveals in his *Diaries* (Da Capo Press; 1982) the marquee value of Bing's name with this entry of April 12, 1953. "*The Stars at Midnight* show [an annual matinee held in London for Coward's beloved Actors' Orphanage] is still in our hair and driving us mad, but we now have hopes of getting Bing Crosby."

Martin McQuade

(Editor: That was another remarkable review of the literary scene from Martin! Margaret Kliskey also sent us a couple of snippets as follows.)

9. My Mountbatten Years: In the Service of Lord Louis, by William Evans, published by Headline Book Publishing, 1989; 192 pages, ISBN-10: 0747201420, ISBN-13: 978-0747201427.

On a film set, invited by Lord Brabourne, Lord Mountbatten and William Evans (Mountbatten's valet from 1959 to 1969) witnessed the following:"Strapped to a chair in what was clearly intended to be a spaceship was Bob Hope. I gathered that it should have been a monkey in the chair, because milk and bananas were being fed to Bob Hope down an automatic feeder. Then the mechanism went wrong and Hope kept getting an earful of bananas and a faceful of milk. Bing Crosby was watching, which gave us an opportunity to chat. What a joy to talk to such great characters, and all so entirely unexpected. Both these great actors were as funny off set and we all had a great time. Bing Crosby was in tears like the rest of us at Bob Hope's reaction to this crazy scene."



Bob and Bing get into monkey business in *The Road to Hong Kong*.

10. Arnhem: The Battle for Survival, by John Nichol and Tony Rennell, published by Viking (21 Sep 2011); hardcover, 368 pages, ISBN-10: 0670918881 ISBN-13: 978-0670918881.

"A fellow pilot was an inspiration – though also, as it turned out, a danger. Though wounded in both legs and an arm, he kept up a cheerful banter. He couldn't fight, so he tackled the Germans with Bing Crosby records, which he played incessantly and loudly on a wind-up player in the direction of the enemy, who were just a few hundred yards away. 'We were right in the front bloody line and he put it on full blast, and I can only assume that the Germans don't like Bing Crosby, because the next thing you know there's a Tiger tank at the front door!' The big gun fired, silencing Bing and blasting Kettley out of the house. The experience was pretty traumatic."

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Do You Care?

Wilmore, Jessamine County, KY— Maybe music helped Archie Kendrick get through the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor 70 years ago.

Kendrick, 88, a resident at the Thomson-Hood Veterans Center, recalls that he kept singing the song "Do You Care" while bombs were exploding all around his ship, the USS Tennessee, on Dec. 7, 1941.

"It was a Bing Crosby song, and it helped," Kendrick said.

Maybe the tune took his mind off all the horror around him; maybe it calmed his nerves. Maybe the song was just stuck in Kendrick's head because Crosby had recorded it a few months earlier.

Whatever it was, Kendrick, just 18 at the time, kept right on singing while he helped feed five-inch shells to an anti-aircraft gun, firing so many rounds at Japanese planes that the barrel overheated. Even today he can sing the words: "Do you care? Is there a chance for me? Do you care? I wish I knew."

Jim Warren (jwarren@herald-leader.com)

(Seen on the kentucky.com web site on January 18)

Crosby sings Crosby

Before performing at the Spokane event mentioned earlier in this issue, Howard Crosby had been in Ireland and it was good to see him receiving some nice publicity. Here's what the *Limerick Leader* had to say last November.

No, not Bing, but near enough. Howard Crosby, nephew of the late Bing Crosby performed an intimate concert at the University of Limerick on 4th November in aid of *Children in Crossfire*. The evening was filled with old Bing Crosby favourites as well as stories of Howard's time with his famous uncle and other Hollywood stars.

Howard Crosby, a native of Spokane, Washington, was born in 1952 and grew up in the Spokane area. Although primarily a business executive, he began singing in church choirs at various parishes around the Pacific Northwest in his late 20s, and over the past several years has performed at a number of charity benefit shows around the north-western United States, as well as in more exotic venues like Las Vegas, Miami, and London. Howard's uncle was one of the most famous and best loved Irish Americans, international recording star Bing Crosby. In his show, he paid tribute to his uncle, as well as many of the other great vocalists of the 20th century, including Frank Sinatra, Perry Como and others.

"This whole idea sprung from a friend of mine in Dublin, who saw that we did a show in the UK last year which was very well received," explained Howard.

"We were asked to come to Ireland because he is a friend of Richard Moore of *Children in Crossfire*. We have done the show for charities in the States and in England and it will be pretty much the same show, with a few additions that are designed to stir the Irish spirit if you will, some of the Irish songs that my uncle recorded years ago," said Howard.

Bing and Howard's father's own grandparents emigrated from Schull in Cork in 1870 and there was always a strong tradition of music in the family. Howard, however, didn't take up singing until later life, and is a successful businessman in his own right.

"As I like to tell people, if your uncle is Bing Crosby, you need to find another line of work, which I did," he laughed. "I started out singing in a church choir when I was in my mid-20s and the next thing you know they had made a soloist out of me and pretty soon after that I was singing and performing more and more. I will say that it is true that anywhere I sing some of his songs, it is in the same key as Uncle Bing, so let's just leave it at that," he smiled.

Bing's Irish Heritage

In November last, your editor was contacted by James Ryan of Abú Media, an award winning Television & Film Production company based in the heart of Connemara in the West of Ireland. The company is producing a six-part series for an Irish language station in Ireland, to be broadcast during 2012. They are starting the series with Bing and follow with John Lennon, Dusty Springfield, John Lydon, Morrissey and Noel Gallagher. For the episode on Bing they'll be looking at his Irish heritage, his upbringing, musical career overall and his time spent in Ireland. The aim with the series is to see whether these people's Irish background had anything to do with their success in life as musicians.

The company had already interviewed Howard Crosby when he was in Limerick. I quickly gave Mr. Ryan the contact details for George O'Reilly and they arranged to interview him too. Also I agreed to speak to them about Bing's career and an interview was duly filmed at my home on November 15. I happily rambled on for about an hour and a half but hopefully the company will be able to edit this down into something concise and intelligible before it is broadcast!

After they left me, the production team flew to the USA and the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* of November 26 reported on them.

REMEMBERING BING

An Irish TV production company was in town Friday filming the first of a six-part series on influential U.S. musicians of Irish descent.

They interviewed Bing Crosby's niece, Carolyn Schneider, at her Summerlin home on the 35th anniversary of Crosby's concert benefit at the Aladdin to help build the Holy Family Catholic Church at Mountain Vista Street and Harmon Avenue.

Crosby had agreed to do the fundraiser after receiving a plea from a local priest who had been holding Mass in the Sundancer Western Saloon on Boulder Highway.

"When the saloon was sold and turned into a topless disco, it was too much for Father Benjamin Franzinelli, wrote Schneider in her book, "Bing: On the Road to Elko."

Crosby died 11 months later at age 74 after playing golf in Spain.

Carolyn Schneider is interviewed at her home.

Adventures with Bing in 2011

And talking of Carolyn Schneider, here she is to bring us up-to-date on other matters too.

Just when I think the public has lost interest in Uncle Bing, I receive an email or phone call requesting an interview or a copy of my book. During the past year, I am pleased to report that I have held 11 book signings, two radio interviews, and one interview for Irish Television (mentioned above). Also, the story of Uncle Bing entertaining the troops in Europe in 1944 was published in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* newspaper.

While I am personally gratified at the number of books I have sold, I do feel that the most important part of those sales is the fact that more people are remembering Uncle Bing and are eager to learn more about him. Books often change hands and pass from one person to another. And yet, most people ask me to write a personal message to them in my book, which indicates that they intend to keep it in their collection.

I believe that the more books I can distribute to the public, the more Crosby fans it helps to create. Therefore, I worked very diligently in 2011 to place copies of my book in various retail locations: Western Folklore Center gift shop, in Elko, Nevada. Nevada State Museum, Carson City, Nevada. Aunties Bookstore, Spokane, Washington. Riverside Resort gift shop, Laughlin, Nevada. South Point Resort gift shop, Las Vegas, Nevada. The Rustic Living store, Henderson, Nevada. Tubac Art Center, Arizona.

Beginning the New Year, I was invited to speak about Uncle Bing via telephone hook-up, to a class at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. My friend Mike Plaskett is the instructor and a great admirer of uncle Bing. The one hour interview took place on January 18th. The following is a portion of Mike's email report to me after the show was over.

Carolyn, you were wonderful. Everyone raved about you. They liked your tone of voice, your openness and your expressive way of telling a story. Of course you have been on the radio with me before and I know how good you are at this sort of thing. But you really wowed the class. What a success!

Technically, the CMU crew saw to it that we had a top-of-the-bar conference call telephone unit; it looked like a black flying saucer.

The graphics worked pretty well. I came prepared with numerous Crosby pictures from books and record albums, and I scurried to project them on the screen, when it was appropriate. I had a number of pictures that went with the people whose stories you told. I put your contact information up on the screen for the last 10 minutes.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for giving my Bing Crosby class a terrific and memorable experience.

Mike

It seems to me that over the years since Uncle Bing left us, there has been a fair amount of competition for the status of "icon", or "greatest entertainer" or "all-time best". The latest is Michael Jackson being called "immortal". However, it's Bing who continues to maintain the biggest and brightest star ranking the world over, even after all these years.

Nevertheless, we mustn't let our guard down, but rather, we need to continue educating the younger generations, and be faithful to the ICC mission statement.

I would like to send a vote of thanks and appreciation to all who continue to be called "a Bing Crosby fan".

Carolyn Schneider

Dear Bing ...

Our good friend George O'Reilly was highlighted in the *Independent* in Ireland on December 24.

A Dublin record-shop owner tasted life in Hollywood when superstar Bing Crosby became a pen pal. Over the years, they exchanged over 400 letters and became firm friends, writes Declan Cashin.

Few singers have captured the sound of Christmas better than Bing Crosby. Think of 'We Wish You the Merriest', his 'Little Drummer Boy' with David Bowie and of course, 'White Christmas', still the best-selling single in history.

Fewer people still could claim to be close pals with the Oscar-winning actor and multi-million-selling crooner, much less a man from Glasnevin, north Dublin.

But George O'Reilly was a long-time pen pal of Crosby's, exchanging some 400 letters throughout the decades.

What's more, George and Bing met up several times in London and Dublin, before the Irishman jetted off to stay with the singer in his Hollywood mansion, and hang out in the recording studios with his famous pals, such as Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin.

George even gave Bing a Christmas song—composed by two Irish men—to record on an album.

Just how that remarkable friendship came about is explored by broadcaster Ronan Collins in a new radio documentary.

George, now in his mid-80s, was well-known in Dublin in the 1950s and 1960s as a showband manager, record-shop owner and manager of the Crystal Ballroom.

The pair's friendship started in the pre-rock 'n' roll years of 1953-1954, when George started writing fan letters to Bing, having obtained an address through his record store contacts.

Luckily, Bing was an inveterate letter writer. He rarely spoke on phones, even for international calls, preferring instead to hand-write personal dispatches, or carry around a small recorder in his pocket to dictate missives to his secretary.

For whatever reason, Bing took a shine to George's fan mail, though as Ronan tells 'Weekend': "Bing was as much a businessman as he was an entertainer. He had a great feel for communications and keeping in touch with people from all over.

"His contact with and for Ireland was George O'Reilly."

Through his friendship with Bing, George soon pulled off an insanely glamorous coup: getting Nat King Cole to visit Dublin in 1955 to open George's new record store on Tara Street.

Entrepreneurial George had asked Bing if he would do the honours, but the star was tied up filming *High Society* with Grace Kelly.

So, instead, Bing wrote to Cole—his favourite singer—who was on tour in England, and asked if he would stand in instead.

Sure enough, Nat King Cole agreed to pop over to Dublin to cut the tape. On the day, he signed records and had a meal upstairs with George. "Once I knew Nat King Cole was coming, I immediately closed my shop so I could put up signs reading, 'Grand Opening with Nat King Cole'," laughs George.

Bing later wrote to George saying Nat Cole had a great time in Dublin, and particularly liked a present George had given him of a clay pipe from Patterson's shop on College Green.

The letter exchanges between the pair continued for a number of years, until one day, in the late 1950s, George received a telegram from Bing asking to meet him in the Savoy hotel in London on a Saturday afternoon.

Needless to say, George made his way to London, and waited in the grand foyer of the hotel for his pen pal.

As George recalls in the documentary: "There was a kerfuffle at the door and I saw Bing walk in and go to the counter to cash some American Express cheques.

"The next thing I knew, he comes over to me and says hello. 'How did you know?' I asked. 'You look Irish, first of all,' Bing replied. 'And secondly your initials are on your briefcase.' I had brought a briefcase full of records for him to sign, and 'GOR' was on the side of it."

They met again in 1961, when Crosby was in London making *Road to Hong Kong* in Shepperton Studios.

Sure enough, George has photos of himself and Crosby walking down Regent Street and Oxford Street, shopping and discussing the affairs of the world.

Crosby himself was of Irish extraction (his mother, Catherine Harrigan, was second-generation Irish-American), and indeed he recorded many a Blarney-ified 'Oirish' track in his day, including 'Galway Bay', 'Isle of Innisfree', and 'Did Your Mother Come From Ireland?'

George had been pestering Bing to make a visit to

Ireland, but the singer's schedule never seemed to allow for it. Eventually, however, it worked, and Bing arrived here later in 1961.

When word got out to the papers about George's friendship with Bing, the Dubliner found himself taking a call from the JFK-appointed American ambassador to Ireland, Grant Stockdale, saying he wanted Bing to stay at the US Embassy during his visit.

That night, George called Bing to relay the offer. After a short silence, Bing said: "I guess we can't refuse the ambassador."

Bing and George in conversation during a visit to Ireland.

As he was leaving Ireland, Bing insisted that his Irish friend come and visit him in Los Angeles, and in January 1962, George arrived at the Crosby residence in Holmby Hills, Hollywood. Usually, Bing preferred his guests to stay in nearby hotels—at his expense, naturally—but George was the exception.

The singer's secretary, Lillian Murphy, later told George that he was the only person ever allowed to stay in Bing Crosby's house.

George stayed for two days on that occasion, but made several more visits to LA throughout the 1960s.

On one such visit, Bing asked George if he'd like to see Dean Martin recording in Universal Studios down the road. George's typically Irish response—in the affirmative—was, "Christ and his mother".

Bing wanted an early night, as he was due in the studio the next day, so he asked his driver Leo to take George down to the studio and introduce him around.

Bing had called ahead to Dean to tell him about George, and soon after he took a seat near the orchestra at the back of the studio, the Rat Pack 'King of Cool' strolled over and said, "George, Bing told me to look after you tonight, so what-ever you want, just give me a call."

Just as Dean took to the stand to record, the door burst open and in came Frank Sinatra, his then-fiancée Julia Prowse and an entourage of about six or seven minders.

Frank ended up causing a commotion by accidentally knocking conductor Nelson Riddle off the stand. George joined them all for a drink afterwards.

Bing always put a lot of stock in his friendship with George, and indeed trusted him so much that, on George's recommendation, the singer hired an Irish girl, Bridget 'Bridie' Brennan, to be nanny to his three children with actress Kathryn Grant.

One of those children, Mary, would grow up to play Sue Ellen's sister Kristin in 'Dallas'—the woman, as trivia fans will know, who shot JR Ewing in the infamous 1980 episode of the show.

Bridie, from Borrisokane in Co Tipperary, took up the position in California in 1961 and was considered a member of the Crosby family until her death in 1973.

George's friendship with Bing also transformed the fortunes of another Irish woman. He was staying in the singer's home one time when Bing told him he was recording a Christmas album, and asked if George knew of any material that might be suitable.

At the time, George was managing singer Maisie McDaniel—who would go on to be a showband star—and had with him a copy of a song she had recorded called 'Christmas Candles'.

Bing liked Maisie's track, which was written by Irish composers Fred O Donovan and Vincent O'Dea, and arranged to record a version of it for his album the next morning.

Bing would later perform the song many times as part of his festive oeuvre.

George and Bing didn't see much of one another in the early 1970s, but in 1976, George convinced the singer, a late convert to concert performances, to come to Dublin for some live gigs.

Bing went on to play a week of shows *(sic – it was just two nights)* in the Gaiety Theatre.

In September 1977, the singer arrived in England for a series of farewell appearances. Though ill and frail, he still managed to record his Christmas special with David Bowie, as well as doing two weeks in the London Palladium.

Bing then went on to the Brighton Centre for three nights *(sic)*. George says he saw him perform in Brighton on his first night. It was the last time he ever saw Bing alive.

After his last UK gig, Bing flew to Spain for a golfing holiday, where, just after 6pm on October 14, 1977, the singer died from a massive heart attack, age 74.

Today, George is still in regular contact with the Crosby family, and has assembled a personal collection of Bing's radio broadcasts with the family's express

approval.

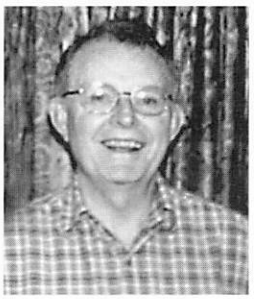
These are not for sale, but stand rather as testament to an unlikely friendship, one that started, incredibly, from a simple fan letter.

'The Man Who Knew Bing Crosby' will be broadcast Christmas Day at 4pm on RTE Radio 1.

Declan Cashin

(Editor: See 'Bing on the Box' for a report on the actual broadcast.)

Celluloid Crosby



John McElwee's article "Bing Crosby Rides out the Fifties" printed in issue 159 was a superb overview of that decade from the point of view of Bing's contribution to cinema ticket sales. Although it first appeared on John's website in 2007 it stands as a summary of that period when Bing remained Bing whilst the movie going audience registered the need for change. I read the article whilst listening to Volume 8 of "Bing Crosby - Through the Years" and turning to Malcolm Macfarlane's accompanying booklet made me consider the personal and musical contributions of Bing in the middle of that decade of change. I want to look more closely at a twelve month period. A pivotal year in all its aspects as far as Bing was concerned.

1955. It was not the best of years for Bing. On the personal side, January found him hospitalised for the removal of a kidney stone. Whilst bed ridden he had time to reflect on the recent behaviour of two of his sons. That month, Gary dropped out of his studies at Stanford University. Dennis was arrested on January 2nd for being drunk whilst being carried as a passenger in a car. (What criminal act was that? Hardly surprising that the judge dismissed the case the following day.) On the showbusiness front Bing's regular sponsored radio shows had already come to an end. From Cremo in 1931 through to GE in 1954 Bing had always had an advertiser willing to pay for his services. The last day of 1955 saw his exclusive recording contract with Decca coming to an end. Jack Kapp signed Bing to the new record company in 1934 and that partnership made him the best selling shellac shifter of all time. Kapp's death in 1949 left the guidance of Bing's recording career to others. Would Kapp have sanctioned the 1955 recordings of "Jim, Johnny and Jonas" or "Angel Bells" and would he have allowed Bing to make such a meagre contribution to his recording legacy in 1955?

Which leaves us to explore the Crosby movie career for 1955. In box-office terms his popularity wasn't what it used to be. Bing's placement in the Motion Picture Herald's list of top ten ticket sellers was ending the run which began in the 1930s. The only feature film he made during 1955 was publicised by Paramount with the hype:

> 'On the wonderful wings of those Cole Porter songs, you'll soar right out of this world! All through your life you'll remember the way Bing sings "All through the night" - How Donald O'Connor bounces through "You Can Bounce Right Back"! What a kick you'll get out of Jeanmaire singing "I Get a Kick Out of You" ... and Mitzi Gaynor pouring everything she's got into "Anything Goes"! It's your most impossible dreams of a musical come true!'

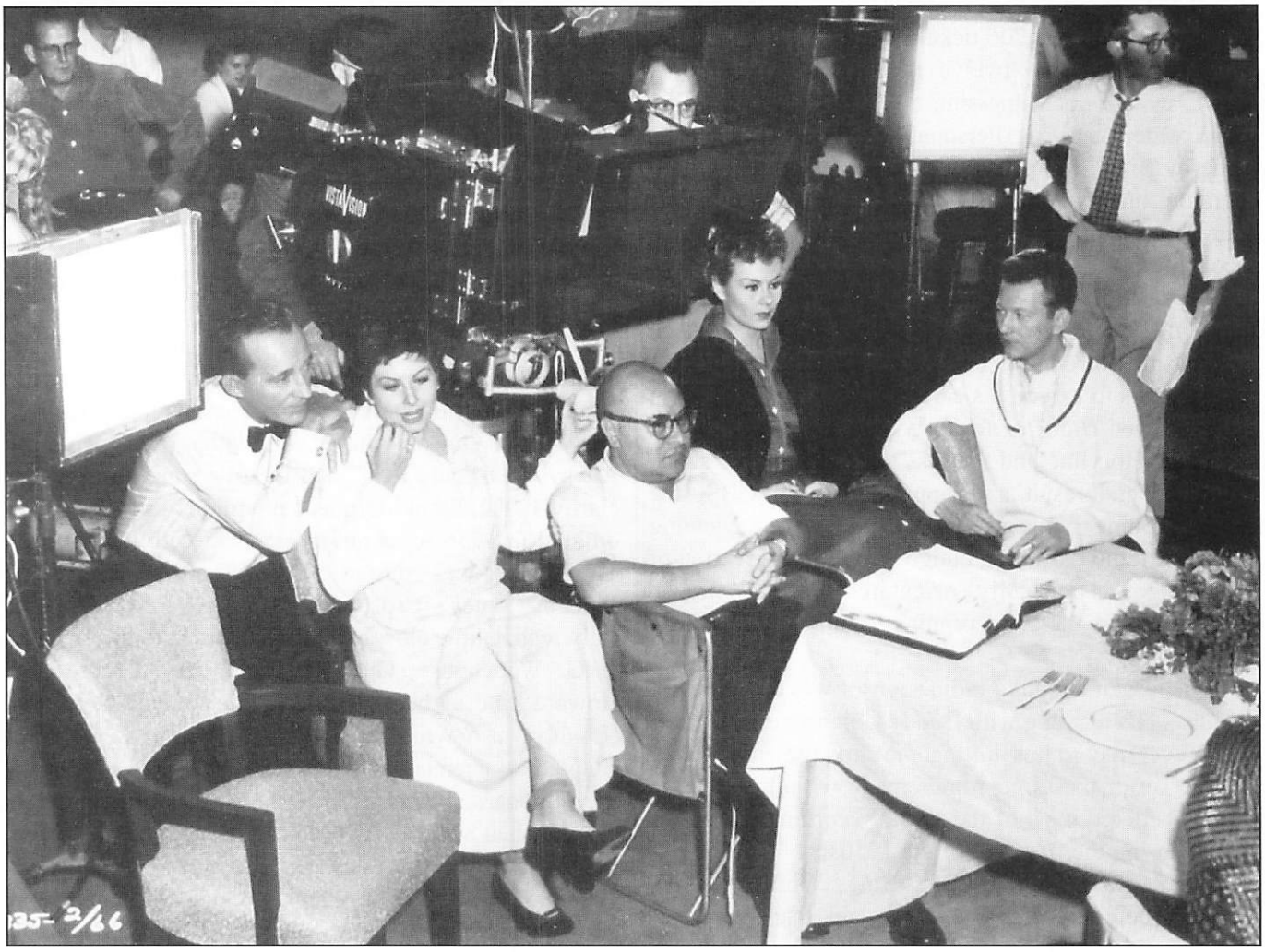
It was, of course, *Anything Goes.*

Bing starred in the 1936 released version of *Anything Goes* when he played Billy Crocker. In the VistaVision film which came along twenty years later he was Bill Benson. Apart from sharing a title, the use of some Cole Porter songs and the main action taking place on board ship, the films have little in common. The 1936 film was retitled *Tops is the Limit* to avoid confusion when it was shown on television. Once again the title song was assigned to Bing's leading lady. In '36 it was Ethel Merman and in '56 it was Mitzi Gaynor. Otherwise the score of the later film featured six Porter songs as opposed to four in the earlier version. One Cole Porter composition in the remake which was not carried over from the original was "Blow, Gabriel, Blow". This was sung by the film's four principal performers (Crosby, Gaynor, O'Connor and Jeanmaire) and for that one soundtrack recording the production data indicates that the Paramount Studio Orchestra was augmented by the Les Brown Orchestra.

Paramount could have used more Porter songs for the first version of *Anything Goes* but the studio alleged that some of Porter's lyric were too suggestive to get by the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America production code. In the intervening twenty years cinema audiences had supposedly become less vulnerable to moral corruption and the remake had two more Porter compositions. In reality, Porter enthusiasts were short changed twice for budgetary reasons. A practice evolved at the beginning of the talkie era for film studios to buy a stage musical success only to omit songs. They would then commission substitute numbers. This is because most of the Hollywood studios owned or were affiliated with music publishing houses. Royalties from songs written especially for films went to studios directly. Over half a century would elapse before the show's revival did justice and more to its original staging. In 1987 a new production of *Anything Goes* was augmented by several Porter classics including "It's De-

Lovely" and "Easy to Love". It went on to win three Tony awards. If only that had happened in 1955.

For the remake the studio once again turned to other composers for additional songs. Sammy Cahn and James Van Heusen were hired and came up with a trio of unmemorable, unhummable compositions: "Ya Gotta Give the People Hoke", "A Second Hand Turban and a Crystal Ball" and "You Can Bounce Right Back". Bing duetted with Donald O'Connor on the first two but O'Connor was lumbered with a solo performance on the other. Newspaper columnist Sidney Skolsky interviewed Cahn at the end of February when filming was underway on the sequences which did not require Bing's presence. Cahn explained that the new songs were needed because the storyline for the remake had been altered and that Porter was not interested in providing additional material although he gave permission for Cahn and Van Heusen to write new songs. In the late 1980s Sammy Cahn went on tour with his one man show which also promoted a book of his musical memoirs. The show was titled "Words and Music' and one of his recollections referred to the first time he played a song for Bing. It was from the *Anything Goes* remake and Bing's response was, "Pretty good". That's probably as non-committal Bing could be without causing offence. Fortunately Cahn was able to redeem himself when he provided "The Second Time Around" for Bing to sing in *High Time* in 1960.



The stars of *Anything Goes* surround Director Robert Lewis as a scene is filmed.

In February of 1955 there was speculation as to whether the filming of *Anything Goes* would begin in March. Bing's four hours on the operating table in January required a period of recuperation that modified his recording and filming schedules. He left hospital in February for a period of convalescence in Palm Springs and he visited the Paramount set in March. By April he was back at work on the Paramount sound stages.

The remake of *Anything Goes* was Bing's last film under the contract with Paramount that was signed in 1932. It was an inglorious end to a showbusiness relationship that had benefitted both parties handsomely. Paramount had little confidence in the film and it remained unscreened for almost a year after filming ended. Like any remake, reviewers could not resist comparison with the original. In the U.S.A. Leonard Maltin summed up critical reaction when he wrote: "Flat musical involving show business partners Crosby and O'Connor ... Crosby fared better in the 1936 film." In the UK the Rank Organisation was studying the film's Stateside performance before arranging distribution through their Odeon and Gaumont cinema chains. They

had an arrangement under which they had first call on all Paramount product. Their normal practice in the mid-1950s was to give cinemagoers a three hour plus programme. This usually took the form of a "B" picture playing the bottom half of a double bill. But they were not confident that this would work with *Anything Goes.* As a result they revived a previous Odeon circuit winner, *Innocents in Paris.* They twinned this 1953 British comedy with the Crosby picture for an August, 1956 release. The ploy worked up to a point. Figures are available for the whole of 1956 for the Gaumont Cinema, Sheffield. Disney's *Lady and the Tramp* registered the highest number of admissions with 35,571 tickets sold. Their worst performing week was in July with 9,531 paying to see *Pacific Destiny. Anything Goes* saw a respectable 20,706 ticket sales.

But, despite the twelve months covered in this article, we are not witnessing a career in decline. 1955 was a watershed year. Personal and business decisions made by Bing acknowledged that he had to deal with a changing audience in a changing world. On the domestic side he went on to marry Kathryn Grant and father a second family. The three children from that marriage developed a more stable parental relationship than the four sons born during Bing's marriage to Dixie. On the showbusiness front he began to use television on a regular basis to extend his career. In November of 1955 he had filmed *High Tor* for television transmission. The confusing storyline and the less than memorable songs made the end result a disappointment for CBS (the commissioning network), the critics and the viewing audience. It did, however, nudge Bing in the direction of appearing in musically orientated variety shows, culminating in the long running "Hollywood Palace" series.

The loss of a regular radio sponsor was a blessing in disguise. His teaming with Buddy Cole saw some of his finest ever recordings hitting the airwaves. The 2009 Mosaic set of these recordings made initially for radio release bettered most of the studio recordings made for Decca during the first half of the 1950s.

1956 saw the album "Bing Sings While Bregman Swings" being recorded. It was said that Bing was dissatisfied with the financial terms offered by Decca for him to extend his exclusive recording contract with the label. I believe that the artistic freedom offered by making a break from that company enabled the Bregman issue to be a forerunner of albums that would not have materialised if Decca had continued to direct his recording activities. 1957 saw Bing teamed with Bob Scobey's Frisco Jazz Band for "Bing with a Beat" and the following year a teaming with Rosemary Clooney for "Fancy Meeting You Here". Those three albums found Bing moving into the LP era and attracting record buyers that Decca had never seriously catered to. Even the groundbreaking musical autobiography Decca released at the end of 1954 had to rely on Bing's musical legacy rather than advancing his recording career.

Which leaves us to look at the post-Paramount film scene. 1956 saw a major cinematic triumph: *High Society.* The budget was more generous than Paramount was prepared to fund. A teaming with Sinatra increased the film's potential audience. Cole Porter provided the songs but this time he was responsible for <u>all</u> of them. Compare the finished product with *Anything Goes* and there is no contest. After the doldrum months of 1955 Bing was embarking on a personal and showbusiness revival.

Keith Parkinson

(Editor: By coincidence, Martin McQuade has recently been to see the Roundabout Theatre Company's newest revival of "Anything Goes" at the Stephen Sondheim Theatre and he offers his thoughts on it.)

A Gratifying Revelation

One of the myriad pleasures afforded by the current Broadway production of Cole Porter's *Anything Goes* is a most gratifying revelation. The 1936 film version directed by Lewis Milestone and starring Bing Crosby with Ethel Merman is not the drastic mutation of the original 1934 stage production, as so often claimed. Granted, much of the Porter score is gone, although "I Get a Kick Out of You," "You're the Top," "There'll Always be a Lady Fair," and the title song remain. For clarity's sake, Ethel Merman's rendition of the latter was omitted in 1956 so as not to compete with the remake. The number was "dusted off" for The Film Society of Lincoln Center's Crosby series in 2005. Now we can fully realize how closely the film adheres to the original P. G. Wodehouse, Guy Bolton, Russell Crouse and Howard Lindsay book, thanks to this meticulous revival (Lindsay also wrote the hit play *She Loves Me Not,* adapted as a screen vehicle for Bing in 1934.) Many of the shipboard shenanigans sparking gales of laughter at The Stephen Sondheim Theater jump right out of the old Paramount scenario. These include Billy's indifference to Reno's flirtations, his split second embarking and subsequent sailor disguise, the duped missionary, the larcenous Chinese converts, Oakley's slang notations and induced sea-sickness, Reno's seduction scheme, even the shorn Pomeranian. Likewise, characters brought to life on today's stage - Billy Crocker, Hope Harcourt, Reno Sweeney, and Moonface Martin - mirror their swellegant celluloid counterparts from so long-ago. In defiance of the verse of the title tune, "Times Haven't Changed."

This shouldn't have come as such a "surprise" after all. A few years ago, this magazine featured my report on *Enchanted Evenings*, a history of the Broadway musical by Geoffrey Block (Oxford University Press; 2009) "The 1936 Paramount *Anything Goes* may have less of Merman and significantly less of Porter than the stage

musical, but it does offer a book that, aside from a few twists here and there, is remarkably similar to the stage plot from two years earlier. Even more remarkably...the film retains a considerable portion of the original dialogue." Well said. Still, it took a ferociously energetic cast that just never stops, and the buoyant direction of Kathleen Marshall, to clearly demonstrate the point. Marshall recently remarked that Hollywood bought the show and "did whatever they wanted to do." She proved that isn't quite as bad as it sounds. (Marshall made her Broadway debut in 1995 directing *Swinging on a Star,* a 1995 tribute to lyricist Johnny Burke which, *ipso facto*, served as a Crosby review as well.)

The 1956 reworking, again starring Bing and directed by Robert Lewis, the renowned founder of The Actor's Studio, satisfies to a degree since a few more Porter songs are featured ("It's De-lovely," "Blow, Gabriel, Blow," and "All Through the Night"); yet it is the earlier movie version which more faithfully captures the jubilation which, legend tells us, flourished on Broadway in 1934 and is born anew, courtesy of The Roundabout Theater Company. Let's hope that this lavish recreation will inspire Universal to at long last restore and release the complete 1936 film adaptation of Porter's masterpiece. Aficionados of the score should know that Mosaic's 2009 seven-CD release *The Bing Crosby CBS Recordings 1954-56* with Buddy Cole and His Trio features four previously unissued recordings of "All Through the Night," 'I Get a Kick Out of You," "You're the Top," and, *heaven knows*, "Anything Goes."

Martin McQuade

Netflix

Celluloid Crosby, the title of Keith Parkinson's section, reminds us of the time when the only way to watch a Bing Crosby film was at the cinema. Since then, TV, VHS, Betamax, Laserdiscs and DVDs have come along and the most recent method to see Bing is by downloading one of his films. In the USA, Netflix is the leading player for such downloads. It has 24.4 million subscribers and is also said to be the biggest source of North American web traffic, accounting for 24.71% of aggregated traffic.

Your editor is told that USA subscribers can instantly stream the following Crosby films.

Here Comes the Groom
Little Boy Lost
Let's Make Love (cameo by Bing)
Road to Bali
The Bells of St. Mary's
The Road to Hong Kong
Top o' the Morning

Neither *Little Boy Lost* nor *Top O' the Morning* has ever been released on DVD.

In January, Netflix launched a new £5.99-a-month streaming service for the UK and Ireland but as yet we have not been able to discover which Crosby films are available to British subscribers. However, Netflix does face severe competition as in the UK films are already available for instant viewing on your TV from Sky Anytime and on your computer from Lovefilm (owned by Amazon). Lovefilm lists 45 titles which include Bing with *High Time* being the rarest but it seems that the only one available for instant streaming is *Road to Bali*, the others being for DVD rental only. Sky Anytime appears to have only *The Legendary Bing Crosby* available for download.

Then of course there is i-tunes which offers downloads of the following:

Going My Way
High Society
Holiday Inn
Pennies from Heaven
Road to Morocco
Robin and the Seven Hoods
The Country Girl
White Christmas

The films cost £6.99 to buy and some are available for rent at £2.49.

We could have some interesting times ahead.

Grace Kelly: From Movie Star to Princess

Chris Knight, writing in The National Post of Toronto, Canada on November 3 last, had this to say.

There's a wonderful letter on display in the new Grace Kelly exhibit at the Bell Lightbox in Toronto. Handwritten by Bing Crosby, Kelly's co-star in the 1954 musical *The Country Girl*, it wishes her a merry Christmas and hopes "that 1955 brings you even greater personal satisfaction than 1954. Like, maybe, an Oscar." It's signed "Bing."

Kelly got her Oscar for the film, which also won the best screenplay award that year. (Crosby was nominated but lost to Marlon Brando in *On the Waterfront.*)

It turned out to be her only Academy Award in a film career that lasted a mere six years yet left an indelible mark on Hollywood. At the 1955 Cannes film festival, Kelly met Prince Rainier of Monaco. They were married less than a year later. Ironically, Kelly was still under contract to MGM at the time, which gave the studio the rights to film the wedding.

Chris Knight

How The West Was Won

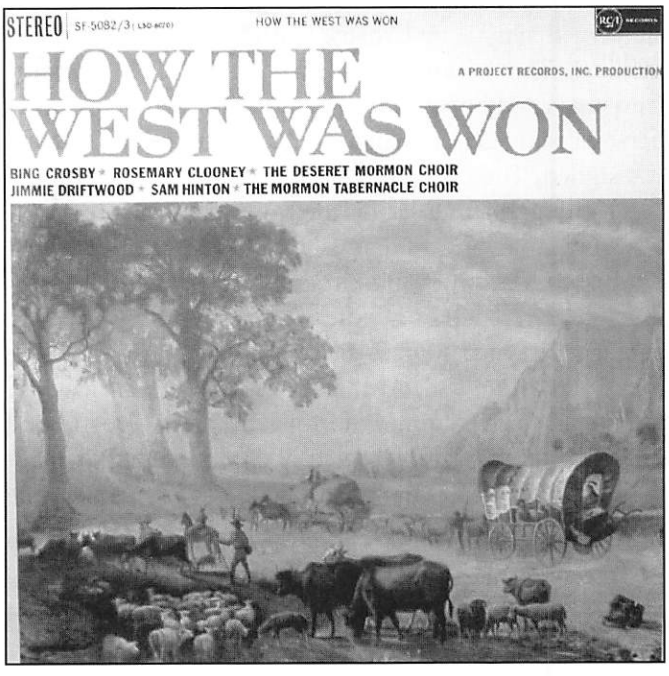
Pat Shields of Studio City in California sent us the January edition of *Cinema Retro* as it contained some interesting information about Bing's involvement in the famous film.

The magazine was focusing on the 50th anniversary of the Cinerama movie and Sir Christopher Frayling gave some background.

"How The West Was Won began life not with a script commission from the executives at Cinerama Inc or with an original treatment sent in from an agent, but with a series of seven historical articles in *Life* magazine - running from April 6th to May 18th 1959. These were mainly written by staff writers from *Life* and were profusely illustrated with paintings, photographs, period newspaper cuttings, maps, diaries and documents; in some ways resembling the *Time-Life* books on the Wild West, in their faux-leather covers, which were issued as a series later in the 1960s."

Sir Christopher goes on to describe the *Life* articles in depth before continuing as follows.

"So the *Life* series began with the first explorers and ended with the closing of the frontier and the rise of the Western movie. The next stage in the story of the genesis of *How The West Was Won* was when Bing Crosby bought the rights to the *Life* series of articles, and its title, because he saw potential in an album of period songs and musical arrangements on the theme, with a variety of performers. This was recorded in July 1959, just two months after the *Life* series ended, for a 2-LP set in Living Stereo, 'suggested by the series in *Life*'- with Crosby, Rosemary Clooney, various orchestras and, for the final section, The Deseret Mormon Choir and The Salt Lake Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Inserted in the gatefold record sleeve, with the *Life* logo much in evidence, was a 24-page condensed version of the magazine's series, rearranged to match the order of the songs on the records.


STEREO
HOW THE WEST WAS WON
HOW THE WEST WAS WON
A PROJECT RECORDS, INC. PRODUCTION
BING CROSBY • ROSEMARY CLOONEY • THE DESERET MORMON CHOIR
JIMMIE DRIFTWOOD • SAM HINTON • THE MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR

This double album was well received, and led to the idea that Bing Crosby present and croon a television special of *How The West Was Won* on actual locations in the West, but this proved too expensive and logistically complicated so the package - articles and songs - was offered to the people at Cinerama Inc/MGM, who were actively looking for a story with dramatic and spectacular possibilities which could show off their very wide screen process. Cinerama Inc and MGM had recently joined forces for this very purpose, and Cinerama had moved its headquarters from Oyster Bay, New York, to the MGM Studios in Hollywood to help make it happen, and to help wean audiences off those 31 Western series on television. Up to then, the process had only been used for travelogues and documentaries, such as *This is Cinerama, Cinerama Holiday* and *The Seven Wonders of the World.* One of the distinctive features of these films had been the celebration of America, of American technical know-how and of fast-moving vehicles of various descriptions - kinetic energy across the wide panoramic screen. *This is Cinerama,* for example, had opened with a fairground rollercoaster and ended with a patriotic montage called 'America the Beautiful' that apparently reduced President Eisenhower to tears of delight. The *Life* series, and the recordings, must have seemed a perfect fit. As has often been pointed out, the very word 'Cinerama' is an anagram of 'American'.

So Bing Crosby sold on his rights to the series - and thanks to Irene Dunne donated the resulting profits to a hospital in Santa Monica.

The earliest concept for the film (which was announced to the press at the end of June 1960 as 'the Great Western story') had been for it to consist of five episodes, each centred on a song, and each sung and narrated by Bing Crosby and each based on one of the articles in *Life* - a semi-documentary idea. It wouldn't be a sort of *Road to California,* though, or even *Grandson of Paleface,* but something much more epic in scale and ambition.

This legacy of the television special soon made way for a fully-fledged narrative saga - still to be narrated by Crosby - which would begin in 1839, take in the Gold Rush of 1849 and the Civil War of 1861-5, continue with the post-war railroad boom and conclude in Arizona in 1889 - a sixty-year, four-generation span in all.

...When *How The West Was Won* was released, some critics asked: 'Where - for example - are Gary Cooper, Burt Lancaster and Glenn Ford?' to complete the cast of Westerners. Well, according to the *LA Times*, all three were in fact approached, but Ford and Lancaster were not available and Gary Cooper died in May 1961 before he could appear. Spencer Tracy was originally cast as General Grant, but over-runs on a previous film meant that he became the narrator instead and Henry (Harry) Morgan took over his part. So Crosby withdrew from the project altogether."

Although we knew that Bing had some involvement in this project we had not realised just how deep it went. Many thanks to *Cinema Retro* and Pat Shields for highlighting it for us.

Stagecoach

***Cinema Retro* also had some words to say about this too.**

Twilight Time is the new DVD label that has been earning praise from classic movie lovers. The company has contracted with Fox to release limited edition (3,000 units) of fine films from the studio's archives…. Finally, the 1966 Fox remake of *Stagecoach* remains woefully neglected. This welcome release presents this terrific Western in its widescreen splendor. Boosted by an all-star cast (Ann-Margret, Bing Crosby, Van Heflin among them) and a star-making turn by Alex Cord, it stands as one of the most underrated films of the 60s. All titles retail for $20 and are available from www.screenarchives.com. Twilight Time also revive the long-gone tradition of including informative collector's booklets in each package. Hooray!

Christmas, Bing Crosby and the transience of fame

How does it happen that one of the most famous people in the world became a semi-forgotten figure? Pat Murphy writing for Troy Media on December 18 suggests an explanation.

For people whose earliest radio memories come from the 1940s or early 1950s, Bing Crosby and Christmas are inextricably linked. Whether it was *White Christmas*, *Jingle Bells* or reverent pieces like *Silent Night*, the Crosby voice was ubiquitous every December.

But Crosby was much more than a seasonal crooner. Indeed, he was probably the first example of a multimedia global superstar, having what was once described as the most recognizable voice in the world.

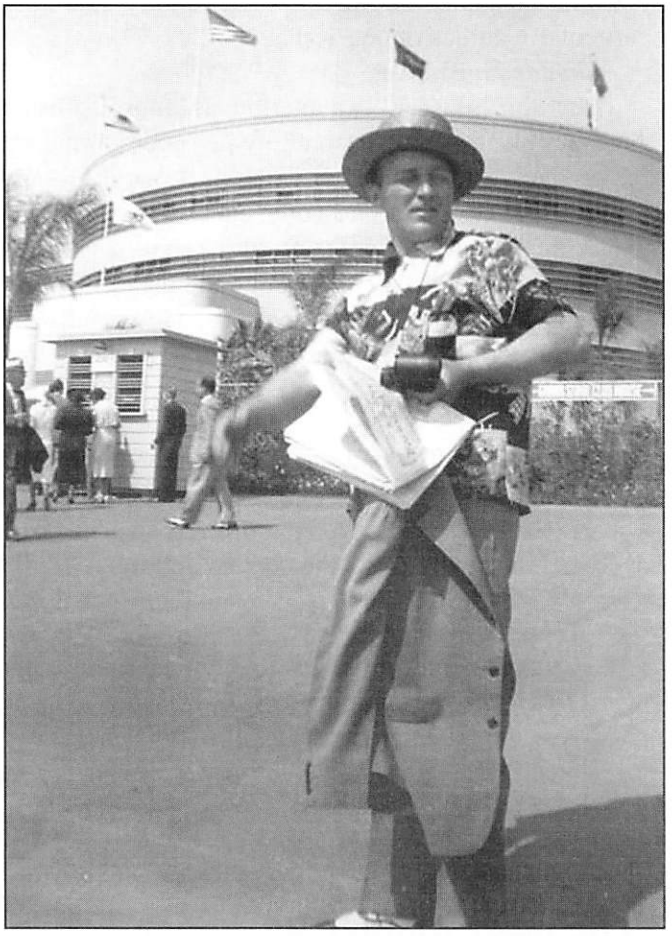
Crosby set the musical template

Through the 1930s and 1940s, he was the most consistent hit maker around, shifting tens of millions of units in an era without the convenience of downloads and where many homes had no ability to even play records. On radio, then the dominant medium of daily communication, his weekly network show ran for 23 years.

In the process, he popularised an easy microphone-friendly approach that set the musical template for a host of followers, including the young Frank Sinatra. Instead of belting with sufficient volume to be heard in the cheap seats, vocal styles became more intimate, even conversational. The critic Henry Pleasants called it "singing in American."

Crosby was also a movie star of the highest magnitude. Between 1934 and 1954, he placed among the annual top 10 box office stars no fewer than 15 times. Indeed, for five straight years (1944-48), he was at the very top of the list. He even got three Academy Award nominations for best actor, winning once.

In a broader cultural sense, he had an unmistakable resonance, that of the easygoing American Everyman. With his colourful shirts, ever-present pipe, and passion for golf and the racetrack, he was the epitome of a regular guy. And in Ireland, he was also seen as "one of ours" – an Irish-American Catholic who had scaled the heights while keeping the faith and remaining true to his roots.



The regular guy with the colourful shirts.

So how does it happen that one of the most famous people in the world becomes a semi-forgotten figure, trotted out once a year as just one voice in a multitude?

Part of it can be put down to the simple passage of time. Crosby has been dead for over 30 years and had become musically unfashionable 20 years prior to his death. A half-century is a very long time in popular culture.

In addition, his public image took some posthumous hits. Allegedly, the casually charming Everyman was a stingy womaniser with a penchant for alcohol, and for inflicting severe physical discipline on his children.

But while it's one thing to recede from general consciousness, it's quite another for someone of Crosby's stature to be almost written out of the history of popular culture. In the lead-up to the millennium, *Newsweek* did a series of retrospectives on people and events that defined the 20th century. Amazingly, the

June 28, 1999, issue – *Voices of the Century: America Goes Hollywood* – managed to fill 40 odd pages with nary a mention of Crosby, other than as a caption to a photograph with Sinatra!

It's tempting to wonder whether this neglect has something to do with political sensibility. Crosby, after all, was emblematic of an assertive, self-confident America, a society with an heroic sense of its own history and a keen appreciation for what it viewed as its positive uniqueness. To modern cultural commentators, it would be something of a foreign country, and not a particularly attractive one at that.

Shoddy journalism

But the likelier explanation is more prosaic. Analyses like that in *Newsweek* are just poor journalism, the product of an inability to imagine a world that was not only different from one's own but also different from what the received wisdom thinks it was. The combination of a lack of knowledge and the influence of groupthink can produce some pretty shoddy results.

Publications like *Newsweek* should know that. Perhaps they once did.

So if Crosby's voice comes at you from the radio or the shopping mall sound system this Christmas, take silent note of the transience of fame. And remember that a mere 60 to 70 years ago, the voice's owner had an overwhelming presence in the popular culture. Indeed, it was on a scale that today's icons would kill for.

Pat Murphy

(Pat Murphy is a history and economics graduate from University College Dublin, Ireland. He has contributed articles to the National Post, History Ireland, Irish Connections Canada, and Breifne. Troy Media can be found at http://www.troymedia.com)

The most wonderful time to remember Crosby

Stan Awtrey writing in *Insider* for PGATOUR.COM on December 14 had some nice things to say about our man.

The holiday season wouldn't be complete without a viewing of *White Christmas*. The days would be neither merry nor bright without watching the classic movie starring Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye and filled with some of the greatest songs ever written by Irving Berlin.

And while many of the scenes are filled with snow, you get the impression that Bob Wallace (the character played by Bing Crosby) would probably rather be playing golf with Major General Waverly (Dean Jagger) rather than getting ready for his next musical number.

That's because Der Binger probably loved golf more than almost anything else. He was most known as a singer and "White Christmas" is one of the season's seminal songs. He was also an accomplished actor who appeared in 86 titles and won an Oscar for his performance as Father O'Malley in *Going My Way*. He produced albums and movies, owned race horses and was one of the world's most popular figures.

But those familiar with golf know that Crosby's real love was golf. He took up the sport when he was 12 years old, working as a caddy, but stopped playing until 1930. That's when he got the bug, at age 27, that would consume the rest of his life. He was an excellent player who was good enough to eventually compete in the U.S. Amateur and the British Amateur.

Crosby was a member at Lakeside Golf Club in Hollywood and won the club championship on five occasions. Among his career highlights was a hole-in-one on the 16th hole at Cypress Point, the famous Pacific-fronted hole where Ben Hogan used to lay up and hope to get up-and-down for par.

One of his major contributions to golf came in 1937 when he founded the Bing Crosby Pro-Am, most commonly referred to as the Crosby Clambake. Crosby drew the game's greats to the West Coast to play in the event, which was won by the likes of Sam Snead, Ben Hogan, Byron Nelson and Jimmy Demaret—four faces that belong on golf's Mount Rushmore. The tournament began at Rancho Santa Fe Country Club in the San Diego area and moved to the Monterey Peninsula after World War II, where it endures today as the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. First televised in 1957, today millions of viewers tune in for the pleasure of seeing the scenery from the Pebble Beach area.

Crosby once said, "If I were asked what single thing has given me the most gratification in my long and sometimes pedestrian career, I think I would have to say it is this tournament."

Bing congratulates Arnold Palmer

Crosby even accepted an invitation to serve as a reporter during the 1958 Masters. He was hired as a stringer for the week by Atlanta Journal Sports Editor Furman Bisher, himself the greatest writer/columnist to

ever come from the South. Bisher told Crosby to grab his pipe and walk around Augusta National, watch the players and make some notes about what he saw.

Crosby took his assignment seriously and turned in his work. Bisher, now 93 and still writing columns, has the hand-written notes from his special golf analyst. In one place Crosby wrote, "I like the looks of this Palmer kid." Nice call.

Ironically, it was Crosby and Palmer who would each help popularize the game. Oddly enough, the Clambake was one of the few events that Palmer never won. He was runner-up there twice, losing to Don Massengale by one stroke in 1966 and losing to Tom Shaw by two shots in 1971.

In 1977, Crosby died doing what loved the most. He died while playing golf in Madrid, having just finished a round with Spanish pro Manuel Pinero. His wife, Kathryn, remarked, "What an appropriate way for a golfer who sang for a living to leave this earth." A year later he was inducted in the World Golf Hall of Fame for his contributions to the game.

So when you're planning the holiday viewing schedule and set aside a couple of hours to watch White Christmas, don't forget the role that Bing Crosby played in bringing golf into your living room. As he croons in another wonderful song, it's another way you'll be "Counting Your Blessings" this time of year.

Stan Awtrey

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters and emails received since the last issue

Perry Huntoon, by email from Naperville, Illinois, USA.

Just received the latest Sepia – Volume 8. It's quite the mixed bag. From the last of the memorable Musical Autobiography to Les Brown to religious numbers to the *Country Girl*. I am certainly glad we are in the CD age. The religious recitation tracks are nice to have as a 'completist' but not ones I would want to listen to repetitively. With these on CD, they can easily be skipped.

I had long regretted that Bing did not record more with Les Brown. I thought they could easily have made several LPs covering the Great American Songbook featuring tunes by America's great composers that Bing had not previously recorded. Bing with the more gentle swing of the Les Brown band seemed like a perfect match. Your comments rather echo my sentiments, although I am not critical of the Buddy Bregman big band backings in his Verve album. I had thought that if I returned to Leeds next year, a short program of Bing with some of the working big bands (other than the Dorseys) might be of interest.

As to the tunes from *The Country Girl*, I couldn't disagree with Colin Pugh more. I particularly loved "Dissertation on the State of Bliss" (and thank you for explaining why it wasn't simply titled, "Love and Learn.") I bought the 45 rpm issue when current and played it over and over. I thought it was one of Bing's finest duet recordings. A shame that it marked the end of his association with Patty Andrews. I will admit that none of the recordings from the film sold very well, but Bing's time on the hit parade was over by then, except for "True Love."

I also bought (and still have) the 45 rpm recording of "Jim, Johnny and Jonas." I thought your comment about it being paired with "Nobody" a bit odd. Here in the States, those tunes were on separate issues with "Nobody" apparently hurriedly issued by Decca as a cover to Perry Como's popular version. I particularly liked Bing's rendition and had no idea at the time that it came from a 1947 Philco Show. I remember being puzzled as to the source as it was the only 'live' Decca single recording I had ever seen and Bing wasn't performing before live audiences at the time. (As an aside, I always thought Decca should have reissued the Andrews Sisters' "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" when Bette Midler had her big revival hit in the early '70s. But without the sisters being under contract with them at the time, it may have been pointless.) Anyway, I don't know how well Bing's "Nobody" sold. I bought it and it got some radio play, but Perry did much better with it.

Jane Stoutenborough, by email from Lakemont, Georgia, USA

I have been enjoying my winter edition of BING. The articles are always enjoyable and informative.

I enjoyed Greg's in depth review of *White Christmas*. As a side note to his article at the completion of the movie, Joseph Lilley (Vocal Arranger and Musical Director for *White Christmas*) gifted Bing with a hard bound copy of the music including special arrangements as were performed in the movie. Bing kept this gift in his office at his home in Hillsborough. And to my knowledge it remains there. Joe Lilley was the vocal arranger for Bing's musicals filmed at Paramount and always tried to accommodate Bing's preference to record his music in the morning hours by arranging the availability and at times conducting the orchestra.

(Editor: Greg's article about the White Christmas movie in the last edition brought two more very different responses. The first went direct to Greg.)

Martin McQuade, by email from New York, USA

I thoroughly enjoyed your article about *White Christmas.* There was much info here which was new to me. Your "blooper reel" was particularly intriguing. It is always a lot of fun to spot these.

"Santa Claus" has always fascinated me; especially since you hear the opening bars during that fantastic traveling VistaVision close up on Bing and Danny as they are entertaining the troops. They seem to be in the midst of performing the song as General Waverly enters the camp.

I have also always wondered how Berlin's envisioned "(Sitting in the Sun) Counting My Money" would have figured in the plot. Perhaps the tune would have ironically underscored the balmy days at Christmastime in Vermont.

Your piece has whetted my appetite to watch anew this favorite film, which I first saw on *Saturday Night at the Movies* in December, 1964. If memory serves, another VistaVision film, *War and Peace* had been the preceding offering and I vividly recall my father, who was a projectionist, objecting when he saw the coming attraction during a commercial break. "How stupid for Paramount to release this blockbuster to TV when it could still make a bundle in box office ticket sales!"

He well knew how Bing's movies packed them into the theaters; and basically had the same reaction when *Going My Way* and *Holiday Inn* made their local TV debuts here in New York in 1963, the latter on *Schaefer Award Theater.*

Tony Strong, Pepperstock, Luton, Bedfordshire, UK

Thank you for the latest edition of BING which I have enjoyed reading as always. However this time I would like to take issue with a few of the articles contained therein.

Firstly, do we really need to know just how sloppy the continuity was in *White Christmas*? Isn't it sufficient to be able to sit back and just enjoy the film over half a century on from when it was made? I really cannot see the point in pulling the film to pieces in this way.

Next to Mr. John McElwee and his 2007 comments. *Just for You* was the first Bing film I ever saw. I loved it then and still do today. I have read in the past that it did very good business at the box-office though your writer does not seem to agree. I always feel this is one of Bing's most under-rated films with uniformly good acting (Ethel Barrymore is terrific in it) and a tuneful Harry Warren score. The story is predictable but it works well enough and Bing is fine in it.

As to the comments on *High Society* – I just cannot agree. The film was a smash hit particularly in Britain and was MGM's biggest success of the year. Comparisons with the black and white Glenn Ford western *The Fastest Gun Alive* seem very strange and did Bing really not pull in the audiences to *High Society*? Of course he did.

Next *The Country Girl.* I recently watched the film again and still don't like it. OK acting yes, but a depressing story and very uninteresting songs. Not for me I'm afraid.

Bing's film career really unravelled with the double disasters of *Say One for Me* and *High Time*. The first was a failed attempt to repeat the formula of *Going My Way* and *The Bells of St. Mary's*. The latter a very mundane forced comedy designed to make an aging Bing appear to be still with it. No really good songs in *Say One for Me. High Time* had the one good one ("The Second Time Around") but it was not well presented and Bing did not seem to make the most of it.

Perhaps Mr. McElwee's fire should have been directed at 20th Century Fox who were responsible for both these pictures and indeed for *Stagecoach* made a few years later. This was a pale shadow of the original 1939 film though at least Bing managed a good performance in it - sad that it was destined to be his last main feature.

The news about the taping of Bing's GE radio shows and that some were not done with live audiences comes as no surprise to me. The GE shows generally were not a patch on the Chesterfield programmes. I only wish the Chesterfields could be released on CD. I feel sure they would sell very well.

Lastly Ken Crossland's review of "Through the Years" vol. 8. Much as I liked the remaining tracks from the Musical Autobiography, I thought the rest were mostly disappointing. Did we really need to have to hear the St. Francis Prayer and Blessing? As for some of the other tracks recorded by Bing at the time I cannot really understand how he accepted some of them when the mid 50s had so many great hit tunes which Mr. Sinatra among others certainly made the most of. Bing seemed to miss out all along the line.

(Editor: Some sincere thoughts from Tony and I do like

to receive letters like his which challenge some of the views expressed by contributors to the magazine. Greg Van Beek really loves the "White Christmas" movie but he thought it might be interesting to members to list some of the continuity errors. It was not intended as a criticism of the film itself. Opinions on Bing's other films will vary from person to person and I will mostly leave others to debate this. Regarding "The Fastest Gun Alive", I think Mr. McElwee was just making a side point about the net profit as opposed to the gross takings. Also I can understand that Tony might not like the St. Francis tracks on Sepia vol. 8 (I don't either) but we were simply following the chronological listing. Many members may not have had these tracks and hopefully it filled a few gaps for some.)

Patti Dey, by email from New York, USA

I attended the TCM Classic cruise in December and the best present of all was *White Christmas* on the big screen during the last two hours of the sail. Lots of us Bing fans sharing the film's special place. The article in BING finding mistakes was fun and sharpened me. I would like to add to it. When Bing is bringing the show to the inn, he has a conversation with his long time stand-in, Leo Lynn and says something about not passing this up. Also, there were many long time character actors in the railway scene and it was a practice of Bing to be generous to them. At one point he walks up to a cowboy villain actor of old and gives him the name, Cisco, so that he could get a better pay rate for the day. Another instance, also in the railway station, where he deliberately got into the shot, speaking to an actor of old, for the same reason. It often meant $200-400 a day's difference, so it was a boon for them and respect for the actor. Bing had a generous side.

Keith Parkinson, Eccleston, St. Helens, Lancashire, UK.

I remember buying my first two Jonzo Chronological LPs at Leeds when John McNicholas launched the series. It seemed a great way of eventually replacing a cabinet of 78s and obtaining a few alternate takes. Now the series - as continued by Sepia - is coming to an end and I will own every studio recording by Bing over a 30 year period. Not only have the 78s been removed from the shelves but so have dozens of my LPs and 45s.

It was not intended that the series ran beyond the Decca years but I believe that Bing Crosby Enterprises have the capability of extending the series. It may not be a chronological programme which they follow but with their access to many of Bing's post-Decca sides there is still a lot of material out there. How about "Holiday in Europe" with the outtakes which we've enjoyed on vinyl for many years?

Another great issue of BING with the winter issue, by the way.

Graham Pascoe, by email from Bathurst, NSW, Australia

We've returned from our short holiday which included a visit to The Rocks area in Sydney, near the harbour bridge. Each weekend there's a 'market' of street stalls selling all sorts of merchandise and while Helen and my son were browsing I enjoyed listening to some old time songs being sung by a lass from Yorkshire, dressed for the period and using an old style mike. What a treat to hear songs of the 1940s well sung.

Then Helen directed me to a stall selling celebrity memorabilia including the inevitable Presley photos and one much less expected. It was a framed picture a little larger than A4 paper size and it featured *High Society.* The centre piece was the familiar cinema ad for the movie (in colour) and down each side there were about five snippets of 35mm colour film of scenes from the movie. I think the piece was marked as '1/300' presumably meaning it was a limited edition and the asking price was about $A249 (say £165 or $256). Helen kindly offered to buy it for me for Christmas but I declined; after all, I have my Crosby mirror and nothing could surpass that. Nevertheless, it was an interesting item, of which I'm sure you are aware.

David Currington sent me the new BING and once again it's a beauty. There's always a number of interesting articles in BING. I look forward to reading more on the copyright law suits. Greg's well researched article on 'That song...' is fascinating and it was especially interesting to read about Bob Phillips' connections with Bing, including Wig's report on the presentation in Virginia.

I'll miss Keith Parkinson's 'The A-Z of Bing's Movies' in future and hope that he can continue with other insights into Bing's movie career. In Australia, as one would expect, the 1940s was an outstanding decade for the popularity of Bing's movies. In Sydney, for example, most opened at the Prince Edward Theatre. Three-quarters of them ran for five weeks or more but only four of every ten non-Crosby films shown there managed to do that. The long runs for Bing continued well into the 1950s but from *Man on Fire* they had much shorter runs (at various cinemas) for a number of reasons including the introduction of television in Australia in 1956.

John Stiles, Pinner, Middlesex, UK

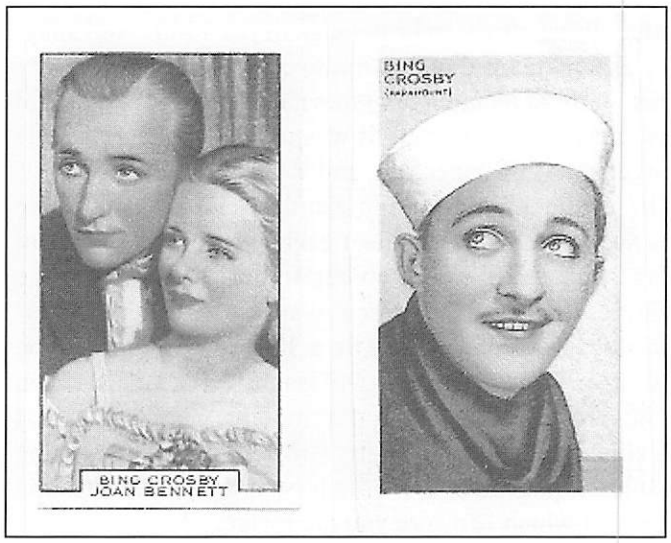
Thank you and all "the team" for the considerable time and effort which you all put in to maintain the high quality of BING. Thanks also for the emails pre-Christmas and the recent advance warning about *Mastermind.* Some of the questions were too easy. However the contestant did very well.

We will all miss the A-Z of Bing's Movies. What a tremendous and dedicated effort by Keith Parkinson. A pity that our alphabet contains only 26 letters.

A belated but deeply felt thanks for the two excellent

CDs from Woodbury / Union Oil and the KMH shows. The effortless and spontaneous singing is incomparable. A pity that there is only a brief snatch of Bing and the Boswells together. The sisters, and also Connee, were as unique as Bing.

…I have reached my second childhood and started again to collect cigarette cards and I enclose the following which may already be familiar to you.



Pat Shields, by email from Universal City, Calfornia, USA

James Garner has a new memoir which I'd recommend to anyone who ever enjoyed his work. Always an avid golfer, he devotes an entire chapter to his various adventures on the world's great golf courses.

On page 163: (paraphrasing)

"Clint Eastwood played his first Crosby 'Clam Bake" in 1965, when he was playing Rowdy Yates on the TV series *Rawhide.* He'd been interviewed on television and asked whether he'd be playing in the upcoming Crosby and he said, "No..... I guess they don't like cowboys." Bing heard about it and sent Clint an invitation with a note, "See, we do like cowboys."

Clint's been playing in the tournament ever since."

Nice!

Bob Grace, by email from Houston, Texas, USA

If either of you have heard any of the cuts from the new Christmas album by Michael Bublé (the Canadian heart-throb), his singing style is very obviously influenced by Bing. And in Sunday's (Dec. 4) *Parade* magazine section of the Sunday newspaper, Bublé talked about that influence, calling this album the most important of his career. He is quoted as saying,

> *"The first record that inspired me was Bing Crosby's Christmas album, which played in our house every holiday season. It was my introduction to jazz and melody and to emotion connected with music. I hope that one day when I'm gone, some kid will be listening to my record the way I listened to Bing's."*

(Editor: There was a lot more media coverage about Michael Buble's chart-topping album including this by Joshua Ostroff on AOL Music on December 7.

"Let's face it, I was a weird kid," Michael Bublé writes in his recent book, 'Onstage Offstage,' about his childhood obsession with Bing Crosby's 'Merry Christmas' album. "As a kid, I sang every one of those goddamn songs on that Crosby record. I was singing 'Mele Kalikimaka' come July."

Bublé has clearly carried that love of Christmas and its signature carols into adulthood. This season he released his own record, dubbed simply 'Christmas,' and will be crooning those tunes in a Dec 6. NBC/CTV special 'A Michael Bublé Christmas' alongside stars like fellow Canadian Christmas fanboy Justin Bieber. He also recently appeared on CTV's 'A Russel Peters Christmas.'

"Long after my pop songs are tired and gone and people have started selling my records for 15 cents at a pawn shop, I really hope this thing gets played every Christmas and that some kid gets out it what I got out of listening to Bing.")

Michael Collins, by email from Florida, USA

I just want to add my ten cents to the many plaudits which you have already received for the latest issue. On a more personal level, my congratulations on the magnificent manner in which you set out the Marghanita Laski essay. The way you managed to put in the Vicky cartoon (from the Penguin cover) right at the appropriate spot was itself a stroke of genius. The two other photographs were also excellent. In theory, one of them could have been further up the page, but I can also see that you did not want to break up the existing paragraph. In the end, you made the right decision. As promised, I got Michael Crampton to send on a copy of the magazine to the Editor of Persephone Books.

Anton Garcia-Fernandez, Martin, TN, United States

I am a professor of Spanish language and literature at the University of Tennessee at Martin, in the United States. I am a new member of the International Club Crosby, and I am writing in reference to the Michael Collins's article on Marghanita Laski and Bing's movie version of *Little Boy Lost.*

First of all, I would like to praise Mr. Collins for a wonderful article that is not only informative and painstakingly researched but also well written and a pleasure to read. I appreciated all the different insights into Ms. Laski's life and career, as well as the very interesting comparison drawn between *Little Boy Lost* and Elizabeth Bowen's *Heat of the Day.* I haven't had the chance to read Ms. Laski's novel yet, but the article has led my wife and me to watch Bing's movie version again, and we both agree that it is one of Mr. Crosby's most powerful dramatic roles. Throughout the movie, Bing rises to the high demands of such a difficult character, handling the complexity of emotions that he

experiences with ease and gusto, always displaying a somber countenance but never overdoing it. Together with *The Country Girl*, this is undoubtedly my favorite Crosby drama. And, by the way, although *Little Boy Lost* doesn't seem to be available on DVD, subscribers to Netflix.com in the U.S.A. can, at the moment of this writing, enjoy the movie by taking advantage of Netflix's Watch Instantly online streaming feature.

With Christian Fourcade in *Little Boy Lost*

Again, congratulations are due to Mr. Collins for his outstanding article, and also to everyone involved in putting together the high-quality magazine that is BING.

(Editor: Thanks Anton for your kind words. Netflix became available in the UK in January and see page 29 of this issue for further details. Incidentally, Anton has a superb blog with many articles on our kind of singer. See http://vintagebandstand.blogspot.com)

David Currington, by email from Turramurra, New South Wales, Australia

Holiday Inn in full colour DVD glory has just been released in Australia. We watched the musical highlights at your place a couple of years and more back so the delight of the colourised movie was no surprise, but a totally enjoyable viewing experience for me in the lead up to the New Year. What did enthral me was Ken Barnes' contribution; and in watching him I was reminded of the rapturous accolades he deserves. He is obviously a great Bing fan, and for approaching forty years Ken has promoted Bing in the most positive way – by his active involvement with the man and his legacy.

Ken's activities with Bing began with his production of Bing's ultimate albums, followed by the superlative Pete Moore Orchestra augmented Buddy Cole backed radio tracks. There were other retrospective albums with Ken's stamp - most notably the outstanding World Records boxed set. Of course the advent of Compact Discs saw Ken's musical excursions with Bing renewed and expanded (with the final instalment appearing last year with the release of *Seasons* on CD).

Beyond the music, Ken's book on Bing and his recordings – *The Crosby Years* – is compulsory reading for fan and musical student alike. Ken has added lustre to a number of television documentaries on Bing and made personal appearances at the Leeds meetings, film retrospectives, the Hofstra discussions and Bing's centenary gathering at Gonzaga. Had Bing been accommodating, Ken would also have produced at least one television celebration with Bing.

Ken's involvement in the DVD issue of a number of Bing movies and contributions for bonus features therein brings us to the present with *Holiday Inn*.

I guess when we think of major figures in Bing's musical career they are John Scott Trotter, Jack Kapp, Buddy Cole and Ken Barnes. Think on that for a bit and you realize that only Ken has been involved with Bing in multi media and in five decades. I think it is quite a valid statement to say that without JST, Kapp and Buddy, Bing would have had much the same radio and record career through the thirties, forties and fifties – his artistry and public adulation alone insured that. Come Bing's mature years, I believe it is no exaggeration to say that without Ken Bing would not have enjoyed the resurgence in his recording career that he did in the seventies

So my toast this New Year is to Ken Barnes.

And as I sat listening to Ken and watching the segments he presented in the companion piece to the main *Holiday Inn* feature, a few recollections were triggered:-

Despite his best efforts, Ken was either unable to locate or prevented from including the musical production sequence cut from the theatre release of *Road to Bali* for its restored DVD issue. This segment has subsequently been shown at a Leeds meeting.

Some years back in a Sydney second-hand record shop I came across a number of transcription discs (if that is what they are called) which comprised the soundtrack of *King of Jazz*. I deduce, then, that for its cinematic release this 1930 movie did not have a soundtrack incorporated in the film track.

There is a fellow living nearby - Percy Waters - who was a serviceman in attendance at Bing's recording of *Variety Bandbox*. I wonder if he might now be the sole survivor.

(Editor: A well deserved tribute for Ken from David. Re "King of Jazz", Fred Reynolds talks about the Vitaphone discs used with the film in his "Road to Hollywood" book. Vitaphone was a sound film process used on feature films and nearly 1,000 short subjects produced by Warner Bros. and its sister studio First National from 1926 to 1930. Vitaphone was the last, but most successful, of the sound-on-disc processes. The soundtrack was not printed on the actual film, but was

issued separately on 16 inch (40 cm) and, later, 12 inch (30cm) phonograph discs recorded at 33 1/3 rpm, a speed first used for this process. The discs would be played on a turntable indirectly coupled to the projector motor while the film was being projected. Many early talkies, such as "The Jazz Singer" (1927), used the Vitaphone process.)

Arne and Maud, Bing and Rosemary: The Crosby-Clooney Story in Bloomington

Andrea Canter, Contributing Editor of jazzpolice.com previewed this excellent show on December 6.

Long-time musical partners Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney come to life on the Schneider Theater stage in Bloomington. MN on December 10th, thanks to long-time musical partners Arne Fogel and Maud Hixson. "The Crosby - Clooney Story" explores the pairing of two iconic musicians through the music of three classic albums, their radio series and of course, *White Christmas*. And who better than Fogel and Hixson to translate this story, just in time to add some glow to the holidays?

…Arne Fogel's interest in Bing Crosby has been evident throughout his career, particularly with his Bing Shift program on KBEM and various tributes in area clubs and theaters. But why a show about Crosby and Clooney? "It had occurred to Maud and I quite a long time ago to do a show on Crosby and Clooney," he said, "First of all because it had a certain amount of personal significance for us, as the very first duet we ever performed together in public was a Crosby Clooney duet (which we later recorded) called "Love Won't Let You Get Away." …They were two extremely popular solo artists who were thoroughly comfortable with each other and who 'locked in' with each other's way of singing so successfully. They were loaded with personality and a highly-charged sense of interpersonal interplay that made them seem witty, sophisticated, and hip in each other's presence. And, they were always associated with top musical personnel such as writers Irving Berlin, Cahn & Van Heusen, Livingston & Evans.... and arrangers Billy May and Buddy Cole.... Other factors too, such as the fact that I'm roughly the same number of years older than Maud that Bing was to Rosie; that I similarly started in the business many years before her, etc.... The parallels, despite Crosby & Clooney's obviously legendary status, are intriguing." Added Maud, "I'm motivated by the material, the Crosby-Clooney partnership, and their respective talents—I knew it would be an enriching enterprise."

For Arne, this is not his first show about Clooney. "Her next-to-last show ever was here at Orchestra Hall, and I was her opening act [accompanied by Steve Pikal and Rick Carlson, who will be in the supporting band on December 10th]. Then of course there were Sue Tucker's wonderful Rosemary Clooney tribute concerts earlier this decade, in which I appeared in a sort of 'cameo' role, performing some of the C&C duets with her." Fogel further notes Clooney's appeal: "She was a terrific singer with great chops, a distinctive voice and larger-than-life personality, who could swing her ass off! Plus, when it seemed as though she was washed up professionally, she worked her way back into vogue with even greater depth and artistic commitment than she'd revealed the first time around. She reinvented herself in a way that was heroic and rare for a popular artist. Crosby played a large part in bringing her back into prominence, and we'll touch on that as well."

Arne and Maud in action.

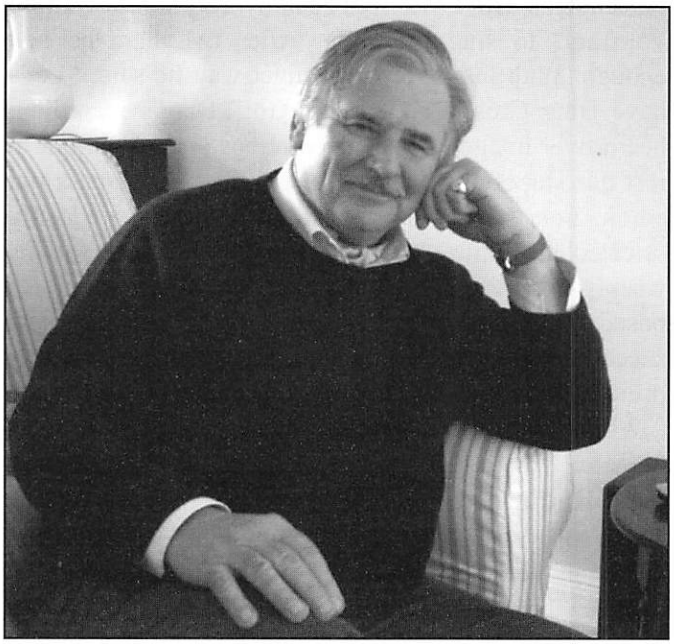
Among the songs planned for the show, we can expect to hear songs from their major albums (*Fancy Meeting You Here* and *That Travellin' Two-Beat*) such as "I Can't Get Started", "You Came a Long Way From St. Louis", "I Get Ideas," etc.; songs from their film *White Christmas*, and songs from their years together as a radio team, such as "Two to Tango" and "As Time Goes By." "We cover just about every aspect of their teaming," notes Arne.

And it's the aspects of the teaming of Arne Fogel and Maud Hixson that make this evening of song one of the very special moments of this holiday season.

Andrea Canter

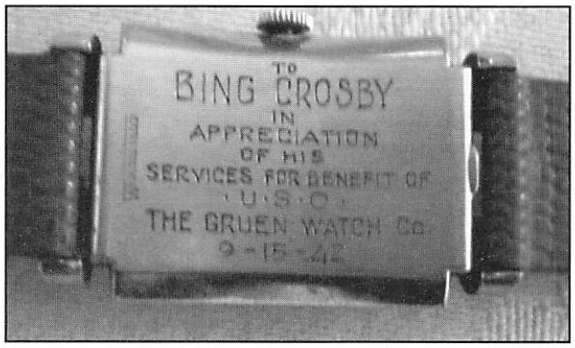
Bing's Watch

In February, your Editor had a visit from James Hadfield-Hyde, a colourful individual who owns the manor of Alderley and is known as the Lord of Alderley. I live very near Alderley Edge. In 1982, Mr. Hadfield-Hyde's friend, Gerald Rand, purchased a watch owned by Bing at the auction of Bing's possessions held in San Francisco. In recent times, Mr. Rand has passed on the watch to James Hadfield-Hyde.

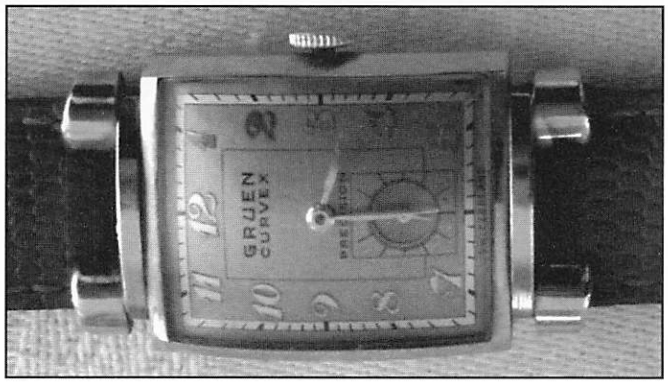


James Hadfield-Hyde wearing the watch with the face on the inside of his wrist as Bing would have worn it.

The watch was given to Bing on September 15, 1942 by the Gruen Watch Company of Cincinnati. Bing had been playing golf matches for two weeks all over the USA to raise funds for the USO and on September 15, 1942 he made a speech in Fountain Square, Cincinnati and then played in a golf match for the USO at the Kenwood Country Club. The watch would have been presented to him at one of those occasions.



Mr. Hadfield-Hyde has replaced the straps to save them becoming worn although he has retained the originals. He has been told the watch could be worth anything between £30,000 and £55,000. There are no plans to sell it but he admits that he might be tempted if the right offer came along.



Bing's hat

Next comes one of Bing's hats!

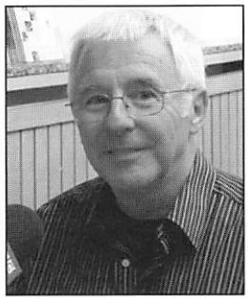
After Bing died, ICC stalwart Frank Murphy visited Kathryn Crosby at her home in Hillsborough and Kathryn gave Frank one of Bing's hats. In the early 1980s, I called to see Frank at his home and went into his famed Blue and Gold Room where the hat was on display. ICC member Ernie Finn and his wife, Kath, were there too and Ernie was allowed to try on the hat. He asked Kath to take a photo of him wearing the hat but she was nervous about it and I took the photo for him.

Subsequently, Frank passed away and his widow, Alma, gave the hat to Crosby fan Johnny Jones of County Down in Northern Ireland. In the latter part of 2011, Johnny passed the hat to Arthur Blood of Derby. Arthur agreed with Johnny that the hat would never be sold but when the time is right, Arthur (now aged 87) will pass it on to another member of the club in the UK who has done much to keep Bing's memory alive. This would be on the understanding that the recipient will do the same in due course. Looking ahead, Arthur suggests that if ever the ICC has to fold up, then it might be possible for the hat to be auctioned with the proceeds going to a charity approved by the Crosby family.

Arthur Blood with "the hat" in his Crosby room.

The Derby Telegraph got wind of Arthur having received one of Bing's hats and on January 10 they did a two-page feature on Arthur which gave Bing and the ICC some excellent exposure.

BING ON THE BOX



Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.

TV highlights

USA & Canada

A good selection of movies has been seen including multiple showings of *White Christmas* by AMC. Here's the full list.

Alias Jesse James	TCM
Angels in the Outfield	TCM
Anything Goes	TCM
Going My Way	TCM
Holiday Inn	AMC
Let's Make Love	TCM
Road to Singapore	TCM
Road to Utopia	TCM
Robin and the Seven Hoods	TCM
Say One for Me	FMC
That's Entertainment	TCM
White Christmas	AMC

CBS Sunday Morning featured a special segment on Bing's most famous song, "White Christmas" on Christmas Day and included a bit of the first public performance of the song from Bing's Christmas 1941 *Kraft Music Hall* broadcast.

Apart from his in-depth look at the literary scene in *Books 'n' Bing*, Martin McQuade found time to spot several Bing references on TV and he reports:

"Martin Scorsese's 2011 homage to George Harrison, Living *in the Material World,* contains this romantic reminiscence from his widow, Olivia. "He liked the moon…If the wind was blowing and the full moon was up, he'd put on Bing Crosby singing *Sweet Leilani* and then he might hand you a gardenia and then make the moment even better." Scorsese spoke about the Beatles phenomenal 1964 breakthrough while discussing his documentary with *The Wall Street Journal* on October 5th. "You can't imagine what it was like. Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra had some of that, but not like this." The director also wrote the foreword to Olivia Harrison's book of the same name (Abrams; 2011).

The plot of "This Episode Sucks," an October 26, 2011 installment of the Cloo Network's droll detective series *Psych* revolves around a suspect's necklace. The investigation leads to an oddly named haberdashery. The realization that this is just a red herring compels a sleuth to reach a post facto deduction. "I should have known a place called *Bling Crosby* would be a dead end."

On a Christmas season edition of *The O'Reilly Factor* on the Fox News Channel, the host led a discussion on whether it was appropriate for a Michigan elementary school to substitute "bright" for "gay" apparel during renditions of "Deck the Halls," apparently in response to the "giggling" of the students. Bill O'Reilly began by asking his "Culture Warriors" to sing the song. After two bars he had enough. With his discerning finger-wag he said, "Let's have Bing Crosby pick it up. Go!" Bing's recording, heard over images of tree decorations and Santa, put to rest this stupefying example of political correctness run amok. For the February 9, 2012 broadcast, O'Reilly selected the topic, American Singing Legends for his weekly feature, "The Great American News Quiz." He posed this question to his panel. "Who had the most successful single recording of all time?" The answer was proudly relayed to his clueless colleagues. "Bing Crosby – White Christmas." Methinks he may be a fan."

USA Radio

The Crosby radio shows have continued to have been heard at weekly intervals on Sirius XM Radio's 40s channel. The shows air on Saturdays at 6 pm (ET) with rebroadcasts on Sundays at 11 am (ET) and Mondays at 12 am (ET). Sirius edits them slightly by taking out the original commercials and inserting their own announcement. The shows heard since our last issue were:

Kraft Music Hall, 21st October, 1943
Guest: Cass Daley
Bing Crosby Show for Chesterfield, 31st October, 1951
Guest: Dinah Shore
Bing Crosby Show for Chesterfield, 8th November, 1950
Guest: Dick Powell
Bing Crosby Show for General Electric, 15th November, 1953
Guest: Peggy Lee
Bing Crosby Show for Chesterfield, 21st November, 1951
Guests: Alexis Smith and Bert Wheeler
Kraft Music Hall, 23rd November, 1944
Guest: Rise Stevens
Bing Crosby Show for General Electric, 4th December, 1952
Guest: Rosemary Clooney
Bing Crosby Show for Chesterfield, 12th December, 1951
Guests: Alexis Smith and Bert Wheeler
Kraft Music Hall, 14th December, 1944
Guests: Eugenie Baird and Jerry Colonna
Bing Crosby Show for General Electric, 20th December, 1953
No guest
Kraft Music Hall, 30th December, 1943
Guest: Cass Daley

Kraft Music Hall, 6th January, 1944
Guests: Bill Frawley and Nan Wynn
Bing Crosby Show for Chesterfield, 10th January, 1951
Guests: Bob Hope and Bob Crosby
Kraft Music Hall, 18th January, 1945
Guest: Duke Ellington
Bing Crosby Show for General Electric, 24th January, 1954
Guest: Gary Crosby
Kraft Music Hall, 3rd February, 1944
Guests: Donald O'Connor and Marilyn Maxwell
Bing Crosby Show for General Electric, 12th February, 1953
Guests: Jack Benny and Joe Venuti
Kraft Music Hall, 17th February, 1944
Guests: Cass Daley and Marilyn Maxwell

Cass Daley guests on the Kraft Music Hall

Also during December 19-26, Sirius again ran "Bing Crosby Christmas Radio," a limited-run holiday channel devoted to Bing's classic radio broadcasts from 1944-1962. The rare recording of Bing reciting the iconic poem "The Night Before Christmas" was included in the broadcasts which had Regis Philbin as special guest host alongside Kathryn, Harry, Mary and Nathaniel. In addition, Regis cited passages from the chapter devoted to Bing in his new book *How I Got This Way*, explaining why Mr. Crosby's songs mean so much to him as he plays his favorite Bing Crosby Christmas records.

"I must have been 6 or 7 years old at the time... every night at 9:30 I sat beside my little radio in the kitchen and listened to a half-hour of Bing's records regularly... his voice was so clear, so pure and so warm, that after a while I thought of him as my good friend," said Regis Philbin. "Even though he was out in faraway, glamorous Hollywood and I was in the humble little Bronx, in my mind, I truly thought we were friends and we'd always spend that special half-hour together—just the two of us."

In November, Bing's niece Carolyn Schneider was interviewed on the *Observations with Bob Fisher* program. The show was subsequently broadcast on 35 radio stations in Nevada. For 30 minutes in a wide-ranging interview, Carolyn spoke lovingly and sincerely about her Uncle Bing. She covered his work, his generosity, his work in WWII, his golf, his time in Elko and so on. One amusing surprise - talking about the song "White Christmas" Carolyn confessed that she didn't like the song when she first heard it in *Holiday Inn*. She has since revised her opinion!

Greg Van Beek presented his 10th annual salute to Bing on WTKM radio on December 21. Greg was live in the Hartford, WI studio with presenter Gene Roberts and in a fast moving show we heard a varied selection of Bing's Christmas songs, mainly from the new 'Bing Crosby Christmas' CD available at Wal-Mart. Greg also played Regis Philbin reading an extract from his new book telling how Greg came to send him a tape of Mr. Philbin's appearance with Bing in 1967. Since January, Greg has been presenting a weekly radio series called *Nostalgia Radio Time* on 1420 AM WJUB. Greg's show is on live for an hour each Saturday starting at 10 pm (CST) / 11 pm (ET). Naturally he fits in a Bing track fairly frequently. Listen online through www.live365.com/index.live or listen to the previous two weeks shows by going to www.1420thebreeze.com and clicking on the 'audio archives' link

Arne Fogel's long-running Saturday night radio program "The Bing Shift" is still heard on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis & St. Paul, MN. and it can be heard internationally, via the KBEM-JAZZ 88 website. Go to http://arnefogel.com/index.php/home/ for a link. On his January 14 show for example, Arne played the following:

Muddy Water - My Heart And I - Goodbye, Little Darlin', Goodbye - Avalon Town - Farewell, My Tane - It's Not Where You Start - It Must Be True - Both Sides Now - Be Careful, It's My Heart - All His Children - Old Buttermilk Sky (1965) - Oh, How I Miss You Tonight - Have You Met Miss Jones? - Hoot Mon - If I Had You

Rich Conaty's long-running "The Big Broadcast" show from New York puts a musical spotlight on the classic sounds of the 1920s and '30s. It's heard on Sunday nights from 8pm-Midnight and you can listen again through the WFUV archives on the Internet.

TV highlights - UK

Films shown included:

High Society	Film4 / More4
Robin and the Seven Hoods	BBC4
The Country Girl	Sky Classics
White Christmas	Sky Classics

Mastermind

We mentioned this BBC2 show earlier in this issue and here are the answers.

1. Which song first performed by Bing Crosby in the film *Holiday Inn* is still one of the biggest selling records of all time? **WHITE CHRISTMAS**

2. Crosby played Father Chuck O'Malley in two films. *Going My Way* is the first. What's the title of the sequel? **THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S**

3. Who was the third member of Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys alongside Al Rinker and Crosby? He co-wrote "Mississippi Mud" for the new threesome. **HARRY BARRIS**

4. When Crosby got married, it prompted a number of headlines, such as "20th Century Fox star marries obscure crooner." Whom did he marry? **DIXIE LEE**

5. Which song performed by Crosby in *The Big Broadcast* became his theme song and was an instant best-seller? **WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT**

6. Which of his school friends is credited with first calling him "Bingo" from a character in a newspaper comic feature? It was later shortened to Bing. **VAL HOBART**

7. What starring role did he play in the '66 remake of John Wayne's *Stagecoach* directed by Gordon Douglas? **DOC BOONE**

8. In the late 1940s, Crosby bought a share in which Major League baseball team that didn't win the World Series until 1960? **PITTSBURGH PIRATES**

9. In 1931, he recruited a fellow former pupil of Gonzaga High School as his chauffeur and movie stand-in. Who was he? **LEO LYNN** (N.B. Bing actually recruited Leo in 1934)

10. Crosby was nominated for an Oscar for his role as an alcoholic singer and actor in which film? It was his co-star Grace Kelly who actually won one. **THE COUNTRY GIRL**

11. What's the name of the church in Las Vegas where Crosby finally married Kathryn Grant in 1957 after the wedding had been called off several times? **ST. ANNE'S**

12. What's the title of the *Road* film originally intended to be called *The Road to Mandalay* in which he starred with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour? **ROAD TO SINGAPORE**

13. When Crosby became the first signing for the new Decca record label, he recorded "Just A-Wearyin' for You" and which other track? **I LOVE YOU TRULY**

14. Which guitarist did he first meet when they both played with the Paul Whiteman Band? Crosby toured with him until the guitarist's death in 1933 after a routine operation to have his tonsils removed. **EDDIE LANG**

15. What condition did Crosby suffer from which made him unfit for service in the Second World War? **COLOUR BLINDNESS** (N.B. Bing was indeed colour blind but I am not sure that that his colour blindness was ever used as a reason not to recruit him for the Forces. At the age of 38 with a family, he was a long way down the enlistment list and Washington decided that he could do far more by entertaining the troops which he certainly did.)

16. What was the title of his last album which included a tune for each part of the year including "April Showers" and "June in January"? **SEASONS**

17. In which 1935 film co-starring W. C. Fields did Crosby have to don side-burns, a moustache and a girdle because he'd put on weight? **MISSISSIPPI.**

Bing, as he appeared in *Mississippi*.

Schoolteacher Malcolm Sumner (whom we mention earlier in this issue) got a very creditable 16 after passing on question 13. He went on to win the round after giving 12 correct answers in the general knowledge section. Your Editor managed 15 on the Crosby section after not being quick enough with the answers to questions 6 and 11.

The Legendary Bing Crosby video which we mentioned in the last issue was seen again on Sky Arts2 in December. A programme called "The Swing Thing" was repeated on BBC4 on December 17 and it described the beginnings of swing music. Bing was heard singing "You Took Advantage of Me" as part of a segment about Paul Whiteman.

BBC-TV's *Strictly Come Dancing* show on Saturday nights was watched by an audience numbering about ten million each week and it was a good to hear the Rhythm Boys version of "Happy Feet" on the November 26 edition as Jason Donovan and his partner were training.

Watching the Channel 4 programme *Britain's Greatest Codebreaker: the tragic story of Alan Turing* in November, I was pleasantly surprised when Bing popped up in it. He was heard singing "Stranger in Paradise" in a segment about Turing going to Blackpool on holiday.

Bert Bishop spotted some Bing appearances too and he writes:

> "On Christmas Eve C5 screened a programme entitled *Greatest Christmas TV Moments*. There were fifty clips and Bing and David Bowie came in

at number 17. Also, there was a *Greatest Christmas Films* screening and Bing's scene with Marjorie Reynolds helping her along with the words to "White Christmas" was included. Sorry, don't have the day or channel as we were with family and their TV was on and I only caught a glimpse."

UK radio

An excellent documentary called *The White Christmas Story* was broadcast on BBC Radio2 on December 23. Narrated by actor Martin Sheen with contributions from Mary Ellen Barrett (Irving Berlin's daughter), Jody Rosen (author of the book 'White Christmas') and Benjamin Sears (editor of *The Irving Berlin Reader*), the hour-long programme looked in depth at the origins and then success of the most famous song in the world. Bing was in evidence throughout. We heard him singing "When the Folks High-Up Do the Mean Low Down" and "Silent Night" (1935) in the lead up to his 1942 version of "White Christmas". Various portions of several of Bing's interviews were used, including the rare "Let's Talk to Lucy". An extract from the 1945 show *Cavalcade of America - The Road to Berlin* was played to illustrate the importance of the song to wartime servicemen. It was explained how the verse to the song was not appropriate for the film of *Holiday Inn* and as a result it was not employed on the commercial release. Our own Martin McQuade helped with the production.

The National Presenters

Russell Davies on his BBC Radio2 show on Sunday evenings continues to include Bing frequently in his most interesting show which celebrates the art, craft and inspiration of the popular song. His selections included "If I Had My Way," "Ida, Sweet as Apple Cider (as part of a Spike Jones segment) "Bob White" (featured in a "12 days of Xmas show", "I'll Get By" and "I Love You Samantha".

On January 15, Russell wanted to play "What Would Shakespeare Have Said?" from the soundtrack of *Rhythm on the River*. His producer Roy Oakshott knew it was on the Jasmine CD "Going Hollywood – vol. 3" but a copy could not be found. Roy contacted me urgently and I provided an mp3 file of the song for use if necessary. Fortunately the CD turned up but Roy very kindly acknowledged my help on the show's web page.

Russell always comments on the latest Bing release from Sepia Records. In January he gave volume 9 a good write-up on his show page and played "The Possibility's There" on January 22. He followed this with "This Love of Mine" the next week. Mr. Davies quoted from my sleeve notes for the CD where I had said "This Love of Mine" was a surprising choice by Bing to highlight Frank Sinatra's songs and Russell then went on to add what Bing had said about Frank in the notes on the 1956 "Songs I Wish I Had Sung" album.

> "He didn't have the authority or the flexibility he has now, but he sang simply, and with affecting sincerity."

Barbara Windsor has had another spell hosting *Elaine Paige on Sunday* (Radio 2, Sundays 1 p.m.) whilst Ms Paige is appearing on Broadway and on January 15 she played Bing and Frank singing "Well, Did You Evah!" Afterwards, Babs recalled the time when she was appearing in *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be* in the West End and the cast was told that Bing would be coming that night to see the show. They wondered what he would make of a Cockney comedy with much rhyming slang and thieves' cant. Some British audiences even found it difficult to understand, and a list of more than a dozen phrases with standard English translations was supplied in the theatre programme. Well, Barbara described how Bing sat in a box and afterwards came round backstage and was absolutely charming without giving away if it was his cup of tea or not.

On other nationally networked programmes, **Desmond Carrington's** Friday night show usually has a particular theme each time and Bing has been heard with "Yodelling Ghost" (the theme was "A Quiet Night In"), "How Lucky Can You Get" and "Sam's Song" (the show celebrated Desmond's 30 years presenting the show and "Sam's Song" was for Desmond's cat Sam). Around Christmas we heard "It's Christmas Time Again" and "We Wish You the Merriest". "Gone Fishin'" was used in a show with a *That's Entertainment* theme and "Don't Fence Me In" and "The Last Round-Up" came from a cowboy themed hour.

The final hour on BBCRadio 2 on Sunday nights is taken by **David Jacobs** and we usually hear Bing every 3 or 4 weeks. "On a Slow Boat to China (with Rosie), "I've Got a Crush on You" (with the Pete Moore backing), "A Time to Be Jolly", "Team Work" and "The Second Time Around" were amongst those heard.

The local presenters

Your editor is acutely aware that we have very little knowledge of the many local radio shows which regularly feature Bing and I can only comment on those where we have details. Anne Hopper emails me a list of the Bing songs she has featured each month and the only other information I have comes from Stan White who sends me a cassette each month of Crosby songs he has heard. If any of our readers can send me details of Bing songs heard in their area, I should be happy to print them here.

Anne Hopper at BBC Radio Cumbria (and on the Internet) regularly features Bing on her Sunday afternoon show and in the four month period under review she played a very mixed selection of Bing's recorded work. She played 33 songs in all with titles varying from "Conchita, Marquita, Lolita, etc" to "I'm

Saving a Dime" and "Looking at You". Anne played "Sing Soft, Sing Sweet, Sing Gentle" especially for Bert Bishop's birthday which was a nice touch. Please help Anne to keep up her good work by sending her requests by email to *anne.hopper@bbc.co.uk*

Bill Rennells hosts *Harmony Nights* which is heard on BBC local radio stations throughout the South East of England and on the Internet for three hours starting at 10 p.m. on Sunday evenings. Mr. Rennells made Bing his artist of the week in October to coincide with Bing's passing and he also publicised the ICC's 75th anniversary. Bill's programme is a request show and Stan White, who is a regular listener, commented that after a feast of Bing before Christmas, the groaner has almost vanished from the programme in recent weeks, presumably due to fewer requests. Wherever you are in the world, why not email *bill.rennells@bbc.co.uk* and ask for a Bing record so that our man can continue to be heard in the South East of England. I'll mention any requests from far-flung locations in the next magazine.

BBC Radio Lincolnshire's **Howard Leader** has been featuring Bing more frequently on his programme of nostalgia each Sunday from 3pm to 6pm. Stan White keeps Howard supplied with the latest Bing CDs and makes helpful suggestions for tracks to be played. Several tracks from the Sepia CDs were heard including "All She'd Say Was Um-Huh," "Christmas Is A-Comin'" and "Moments to Remember". There's a "Listen again" facility for up to 7 days after the initial broadcast. Howard welcomes requests which can be emailed to *howard.leader@bbc.co.uk*

"The Late Paul Barnes", the big band and jazz oriented show hosted by the award-winning **Paul Barnes** continues to be heard for two hours over seven BBC local radio stations and on the Internet starting at 11 p.m. on Saturday nights. There's also a "Listen again" facility for up to 7 days after the initial broadcast. Paul usually focuses on the Bing calendar in his first programme of the month. Unfortunately some of the songs of the month we had selected did not fit in with the show's emphasis on big band and jazz tunes and he has passed the calendar by on several occasions. Paul did however like the December calendar ("lovely shot, very evocative") and following Stan White's suggestion, Paul played the alternate version of "White Christmas" where Bing misses the word "your" out of the last line.

Ireland

As described earlier in this issue, George O'Reilly was featured on RTÉ Radio 1 on Christmas Day in an hour-long documentary called "The Man Who Knew Bing Crosby". Ronan Collins in conversation with George talked about Bing's meetings and correspondence with George over the years. Many of Bing's recordings were interspersed throughout the programme as George described Bing's visits to Ireland and his many contacts with him.

George O'Reilly welcomes Bing and Kathryn to Ireland.

Australia

Graham Pascoe reports that although Bing's movies are rarely shown on free-to-air television in Australia, *Robin and the 7 Hoods* was shown on one of the networks in the early evening of Saturday 5 November. It had first appeared on Australian TV in 1970. When the film had opened in Sydney's Regent theatre in 1965 the critic who reviewed it for The Sydney Morning Herald said it was 'a lousy movie' but The Sun-Herald's reviewer liked the presentation of the song 'Style' (but not the movie). Graham himself thought some of the film was belaboured but overall it was quite entertaining and the opportunity to see Bing and also Graham's favourite character actor, Sig Ruman, was not to be missed.

The anniversary of Bing's death was marked by several radio stations, two of which presented interviews with John Allan, President of the Australian Bing Crosby Society. John was heard with Father Gerald Dowling on the "Family Counsellor" programme on Radio Sport National on October 9 and with Kathy Bedford on ABC Radio 774 on October 14. In addition, on November 6, Philip Brady and Bruce Mansfield talked with club secretary Peter De Ryk about the society on 3AW.

The Golden Days community radio station in Victoria now has a half-hour programme on Wednesday afternoons called "On Air with Bing" and John Allan has recorded a commercial for the Australian Bing Crosby Society to be played by the station.

Unfortunately the Ken Boness radio show, "The Melody Lingers On with Bing Crosby & Friends" on behalf of the Australian Bing Crosby Society, concluded its almost 15 year run with the January 27 presentation as Ken is retiring from radio. I am sure that all Crosby fans will join me in thanking Ken for all his hard work in promoting Bing over so many years.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Hal Kanter, an Emmy Award-winning comedy writer, and a director and producer whose career included writing for Bing and Bob Hope, directing Elvis Presley and creating the landmark 1960s TV series "Julia" starring Diahann Carroll, died on November 6. He was 92. Kanter was not quite 18 in 1936 when a job for a comic strip ghost writer took him to Hollywood, where he got his start in radio. After serving in the Army during World War II, he resumed his career in radio, including several years writing for Bing's show. Kanter moved into television in 1949 as head writer for "The Ed Wynn Show," a live comedy-variety show. He went on to create, produce and head the writing team on "The George Gobel Show," another live comedy-variety program for which he shared an Emmy Award in 1955 for best written comedy material. Among his movie credits as a writer are *Road to Bali*, *Let's Make Love*, Hope's *Bachelor in Paradise* and Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis' *Money from Home* and *Artists and Models* — as well as the movies *Pocket Full of Miracles* and *Move Over, Darling*. He also directed Presley in the 1957 movie *Loving You*, which Kanter co-wrote; and he wrote the screenplay for Presley's 1961 film *Blue Hawaii*. Kanter's longest-running writing job was the annual Academy Awards ceremony. Beginning in 1952, a year before the broadcast moved from radio to television, he wrote for the Oscar show at least 33 years. Kanter spoke warmly of his time working for Bing. In his autobiography "So Far, So Funny" (1998) he writes:

"Every performer had enormous respect and affection for our star. Bing could be an engaging conversationalist, the consummate gentleman, tactful, witty, easygoing and thoroughly professional in his work. He expected the same from his employees. . .

Working conditions with the Crosby show from the very beginning became the yardstick by which I was to measure all subsequent assignments, most of which were no match for the pleasant model Crosby and Bill Morrow set with Bill's coproducer, Murdo MacKenzie.

Bing was the king of cool. There is only one instance I recall him losing it We were actually taping the show and while they were on stage, I was sitting in Bing's dressing room writing the tag, the good nights... Finally Ken Carpenter was doing the last commercial when Bill walked out on stage with the script and carbon copies; he had made a change in one in pencil and was literally handing copies out to Bing, to the guest star and whoever else had something to say, and then slipped Ken's carbon copy under the copy he was reading. . . . I guess he [Bing] and Ken were about the only two people I know who could carry a thing like that off and not be rattled by it. Later, backstage, Crosby said to me, "Never do that again. Never." The look in his blue eyes was the father of the laser beam. There may still be a hole in the wall behind where I stood."

Hal Kanter even took part in the Chesterfield show of October 11, 1950 when playing CBS vice president, Hubbell Ackerman Jr. he gave Crosby a dressing down for appearing on another network. In another book, Kanter is quoted as follows.

"We used to do jokes about Bing's lack of hair or his quickly receding hairline. Very seldom did Bing ever say anything about a script or ever complain. But we had Fred Astaire as a guest on one show, and we had a joke. Fred said to Bing, 'You used to be taller," and Bing said, "Yeah, well, I used to comb mine up." And Fred evidently didn't care for the joke; he did not want to admit that he wore a piece, whereas [to] Bing it didn't make any difference."

(Hal Kanter, as quoted in *The Great American Broadcast,* page 177)

Dick Tufeld, who died in January at the age of 85, was the man who for seven years said the immortal words "And now, from the Hollywood Palace, here is your host, Bing Crosby." He was an actor, announcer, narrator, and voice actor from the 1950s onward. Perhaps best known as the voice of the Robot in the TV series *Lost in Space*, a role he reprised for the 1998 feature film, he also provided the narration voiceover for many other Irwin Allen productions, such as *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* and *The Time Tunnel.*

Michael Crampton greets Mozelle in October 2001.

Mozelle Seger, Bing's personal accountant for 27 years, died on February 5 at the age of 92. Mozelle came to our Leeds meeting in 2001 and gave a presentation called *Stories of a 'Pencil Pusher'*. We reproduced the text of this in BING #129. She also attended the Hofstra and Gonzaga tributes in 2002-3 and gave similar talks. Clearly Mozelle really enjoyed her time with Bing Crosby Enterprises and had tremendous love and affection for Mr. Crosby. She went to Bing's funeral where press photographers snapped her thinking she was Dorothy Lamour and the picture appeared in the papers with a caption indicating "Dorothy Lamour arrives for Bing's funeral." Mozelle stayed close to Mary Crosby over the years. Her presentation at Leeds closed with the words:

"Throughout the years, I always felt that Bing Crosby was a friend, as well as my Boss. And as I look back I think I had one of the best jobs in the world for a very interesting family."

SEVENTY FIVE YEARS AGO

As 1937 opened, Bing was busy filming *Waikiki Wedding* and hosting the weekly *Kraft Music Hall*. *Waikiki Wedding* had its New York premiere on March 24 and it went on to become the third highest grossing picture of the year. Reviews were good.

Shirley Ross and Bing film a scene for *Waikiki Wedding*.

> A romantic picture, pure and simple, *Waikiki Wedding* should have no difficulty getting by anywhere. It's saccharine celluloid, sugar coated by Bing Crosby's and Shirley Ross' crooning in a surefire palmetto setting. The prime possible box office deterrent with this pic is that it comes so soon after the release of Crosby's *Pennies from Heaven* for Columbia, but this damper should not be drastic. While none of the songs here will hit the top performance brackets, they fit the picture's theme and the voices of Crosby, Shirley Ross and Martha Raye. They should get at least a minor play on the air. . . (Crosby) also makes the best of his songs, a couple of them spotted in night sailboat scenes that are very well photographed and directed.
> (*Variety*, March 31, 1937)

Bing had recorded the songs from the film in February with Lani McIntyre and his Hawaiians. His recording of "Sweet Leilani" topped the charts during a 25 week stay and was warmly welcomed by the British publication *The Gramophone.*

> The male list is headed once again by the inimitable Bing Crosby with "Sweet Leilani" from his film *Waikiki Wedding.* This is one of Crosby's best recordings since "May I."
> (*The Gramophone*, June 1937)

On March 3, Bing recorded three songs (including "Too Marvellous for Words") with Jimmy Dorsey and his Orchestra in Hollywood and this time *The Gramophone* did not seem very impressed.

> I was rather disappointed with Bing Crosby's choice of songs this month. "Too Marvellous for Words" and "Sentimental and Melancholy" (Brunswick 02452) are a shade better than "What Is Love" and "Never in a Million Years" on Bruns. 02453. Mark you, only the songs are indifferent; his voice and method of singing them are still tops with me.
> (*The Gramophone*, September 1937)

The American record buying public was impressed however and "Too Marvellous for Words" topped the charts in the coming months.

Whilst March was turning out to be a good month for Bing, he was brought back to earth by frank and direct correspondence dated March 18 from his accountant, Todd Johnson of Johnson and Johnson. Mr. Johnson summarized Bing's projected income for 1937 as $500,000. From this, his client will have to pay 10 percent to his manager Everett Crosby and taxes will take about $236,000. This will leave Bing approximately $150,000 to cover his personal expenses. Bing has apparently lost $13,431 on horse races in the previous two months and in addition has paid $9,575 to Dixie for household and other uses. The letter continues:

> From the above tabulation, you will see that you would have available for personal use or for investment $150,000, or $12,500 per month. I want to call your attention to the fact that during the months of January and February you have had personal expenditures of

approximately 100 percent of your total income. Furthermore, if you spend 100 percent of your expected income, this leaves no money for the payment of your $85,000 note at the Citizens Bank or for the purchase of additional investments, additional racehorses, or any other capital expenditures. . . .

Let me say here, Bing, that I am fully aware of the fact that the size of your personal expenditures is not directly any of my business. I also know that I am taking a chance of incurring your ill will in calling the same to your attention. However, I feel that I am your friend as well as your tax counsel and, regardless of consequences, I feel I must call this matter to your attention. My sole purpose in doing so is the hope that you will restrict your personal expenditures largely to the end that your untiring efforts and long days and hours of work will result in your accumulating a considerable future, instead of having nothing left when your career is ended.

(As reproduced in *BINGANG* magazine, December, 2000)

Starting on April 26 until mid-June, Bing filmed *Double or Nothing* with Mary Carlisle, Martha Raye and Andy Devine. His *Kraft Music Hall* broadcasts were continuing and proving very popular. There was a wide variety of guests and Metropolitan Opera star Rose Bampton was one and she later wrote:

> If one were hunting for bad points, I think his only one would be that perhaps he is too self-effacing. I can recall the occasion of one broadcast which demanded that Bing learn an arrangement of the sextette of "Lucia." Bing insisted that he didn't read music, that he wasn't a good musician, yet in spite of all this, inside of fifteen minutes he was singing as nonchalantly as any opera singer a most difficult arrangement which had been allotted to him.
>
> By this little criticism I do not mean to say that one must be arrogant, but surely Bing should be cognizant a little more of his own quite unique ability and standing.
>
> But then, perhaps that is just one of the reasons why every artist who is on his program comes away with a feeling of having made a very sincere new friend, and is just another Crosby fan for ever after.
>
> (Rose Bampton, in a letter to journalist Marie Manovill dated April 4, 1938)

Jimmy Dorsey and his Orchestra had been backing Bing on the *Kraft* show but Jimmy left the show after the July 1 broadcast. John Scott Trotter was the replacement.

> "Larry Crosby, Bing's brother and public relations director, sent me a wire, 'Can you be in Hollywood on the 28th of June and take over the orchestra of the Kraft Music Hall on July 8, 1937?' Actually that is what you might call, as my good friend George Gobel says, starting rather 'high line,' because although I'd rehearsed and directed orchestras, I had never had an orchestra of my own, with my own name. That was sort of beginning at the top. The first time I appeared under my own name 'John Scott Trotter and his Orchestra' was on the Kraft Music Hall with Bing. The Kraft Music Hall went fifty weeks a year. I did one hundred and forty consecutive Thursdays without missing one; some sort of record."
>
> (John Scott Trotter, speaking in an exclusive interview with Gord Atkinson, subsequently broadcast in *Gord Atkinson's The Crosby Years*)

FIFTY YEARS AGO

Rena Albanesi writing in the April 1962 edition of BINGANG highlighted the issue of 15 LPs in the Bing's Hollywood series and she reproduced the *Variety* review which is shown below.

Bing's Hollywood, Decca

The timing was just right for Decca's' massive release of Bing Crosby's Hollywood story. It fits perfectly into the programming pattern being adopted by so many radio stations, which in veering away from Top 40, are going in for marathon spinning of an individual personality. This Crosby release is tailor-made for them, in that it consists of 15 separate LP's containing 189 songs from over 40 pictures. No singer has come close to that mark and it's a record that's sure to stand for a long, long time. For the average consumer the purchase of the complete series will obviously be hard on the pocket-book but each LP can be obtained separately (the suggested retail price is $3. 98) and each one is a gem. Not only did Crosby have a solid song-selling way right from the beginning, but he had top tune-smiths turning out material for him all the way. Among the memorable cleffing teams who delivered hit after hit for him were Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger, Richard Rodgers & Lorenz Hart, Mack Gordon & Harry Revel, James Monaco & John Burke, Harold Arlen & Johnny Mercer, Harry Warren and Leo Robin, and Harold Arlen & Ira Gershwin. Among the solo cleffers were Cole Porter, and, of course, Irving Berlin who gave him "White Christmas" for the "Holiday Inn" picture in 1942. The series is virtually a recorded history of the filmusical genre and a credit to all concerned.

(*Variety*, March 14, 1962)

BINGANG of August 1962 reviewed Bing's May 14 TV show and printed an interesting interview conducted by Kay Gardella of the *Daily News*.

A PRODIGAL CROSBY RETURNS TO HIS DAD'S TV SPECIAL

A reunion that promises to strike a nostalgic note - and that's all, it's hoped - takes place tomorrow night on ABC-TV when Bing Crosby welcomes his eldest son Gary, the family maverick, to his final special of the season. With the feudin', fussin' and fightin' behind them, the two Crosbys will be arm-in-arm singing a song they turned into a big hit a few seasons ago, called "A Simple Melody."

The melody played by the hot-headed Gary, during the days he was reaching for manhood, wasn't always so simple. And Papa Bing, a disciplinarian didn't mind letting him know when he was socially off-key.

"I didn't like some of the things he was doing," said the singer of his Las Vegas-loving son, "and told him so, that's all."

"We had the usual, father-son tiffs," he crooned via long-distance phone from California. "No one really took them too seriously.

Father and son take a break from rehearsals for their 1962 TV show.

Gary, who has a night club act, is in great shape, according to Bing, striking just the right note of paternal pride. "He is down to 170 lbs., a new low for him, and is full of enthusiasm. We gave him a great spot on the show too. He'll play an athletic director at a vacation resort, which happens to be the theme of the show.

Aside from Gary, Bob Hope will also be appearing with his lifetime friend and kibitzer. So will Edie Adams, who's back in action after the tragic death of her husband Ernie Kovacs. Also there will be clarinettist Pete Fountain and the Smothers Brothers. "It looks like it's going to be a jolly one," commented the show's star, which cued him into a two-minute solo number singing the praises of Edie Adams, who heads a series of her own specs on ABC next season.

After winding up his seasonal commitments, Bing said he plans a long hiatus south of the border in Baja California where he has built a home for his wife Kathryn Grant Crosby, and their three children.

"It's near La Paz," explained the Groaner, who, it's safe to bet, never builds a house near any place without an angle to it. La Paz, for instance, happens to be one of the best fishing spots in the world and Bing, an ardent angler, is trying for a record.

Another Crosby-owned home in Palm Springs, California became the focal point of countrywide interest over a month ago when President Kennedy took refuge in it, leaving a trail of show business blood behind him. It seems that Frank Sinatra, an ardent Democrat who sang his head off during Kennedy's campaign days, reportedly left Palm Springs in a huff when he learned the President chose the Crosby home to hide away in. And him a Republican!

Edie Adams runs through one of her songs

"Frank never contacted me about it," said Bing who happens to be a longtime friend of Sinatra. "I just don't believe he was really very angry about it. I saw him on Hope's last show and he took a lot of kidding about it. He didn't seem miffed."

"Actually," continued Bing modestly "I wasn't very involved in the business. I was simply asked if the President · could use the house and, of course, I said yes. He's a fine man and as far as I'm concerned he can use it any time. I'm sure, because it's isolated and therefore easy to maintain security, is why it was picked."

Crosby had just returned from Mexico, where he spent recuperating from a kidney operation, interrupted by side trips to Mexico City, Taxco, Acapulco, and other places, shopping for furniture.

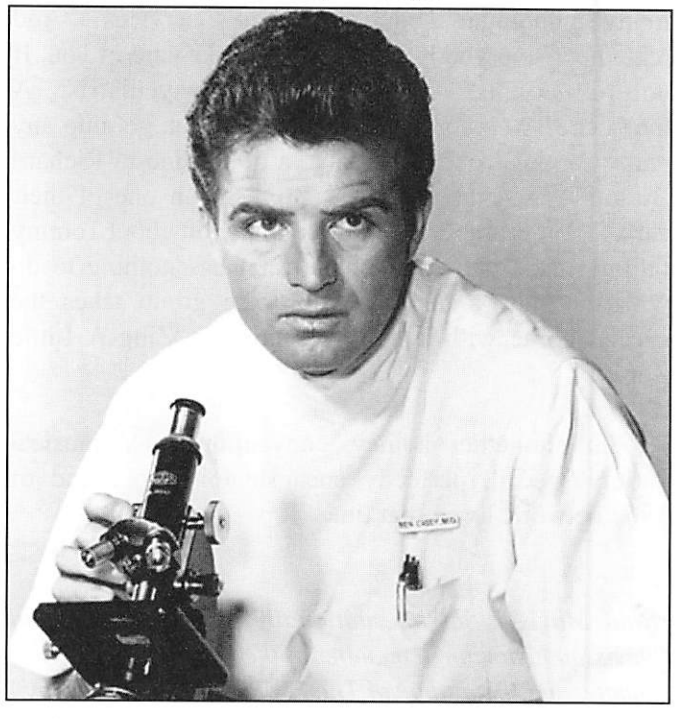
"We furnished the new house in Mexican colonial style," said Bing, adding: "I'm heading back there until the middle of June, after which I take off for Europe. There's talk about me doing the film version of *The Devil's Advocate* in Italy, but, so far, it's not definite. I'd certainly like to do it though."

Since his illness last January there also has been talk about him quitting TV. But the 58-year-old actor-singer-golfer made a short putt out of that rumor. "It just isn't so," said the multi-millionaire. Having added a TV production outfit to his money making enterprises – which include cattle ranching, racehorses, tracks, oil wells and frozen orange juice – he insists quitting is impossible. "My TV specials tie in with everything else," he said. "If I let up the whole shebang collapses."

Out of the Crosby's TV production outfit comes the popular "Ben Casey" series, Bing's specs, the Pebble Beach Golf Tournament and "Come-a-Running", another medical series awaiting network space. Also on the drawing board to Crosby, is a series on psychiatry and a sports show. The latter was originally developed for Cliff Robertson, but he turned it down.

Recently, Vince Edwards, the two-fisted surgeon of the "Ben Casey" series tried to up his weekly medical fee from the $1,700, which the Crosby company pays him, to $7,500. Bing who admittedly leaves the details of the business to Basil Grillo, head of Crosby Productions, considered this a little high.

"You can't blame an actor who gains sudden popularity to want more money, it's just a question of how much more, that's all," he says.



Vince Edwards in his *Ben Casey* role.

Edwards, as you know, is the run-a-way star of TV this year. His quick climb into the hearts of the female viewers even has Crosby shaking his head in amazement. "If he's smart," said the man who has outdistanced them all, "he'll make this last as long as he can."

"How?" we asked.

"By avoiding the song-and-dance road so many before him have taken. It's a mistake," reasoned Bing, "to destroy an image that's putting money in your pocket. Accepting guest spots, where he becomes the object of gags and jokes ridiculing the "Ben Casey" image, shortens his staying power. It would be much wiser to continue along a dramatic road, and preserve the serious, dour surgeon picture he's created as long as he can make it payoff.",

The golden-voiced crooner, who's gifted with a Midas touch, is usually on the receiving end of advice. "I made it to the top by listening. Not by doing all the talking," he volunteered. "I always looked at a guy's track record and if it was good I listened.

"I learned early," the singer added, "that I didn't know it all. There were a lot smarter people around who knew their business. So I quickly developed a ready ear, and was always willing to listen to good advice, I still am."

No one can quarrel with Bing's success...or his talent...or his ears. Everything the old master does these days looks effortless, but his relaxed facade is the result of hard work and total dedication to his job. Another secret of his long-time success, he revealed, is diversification.

"You've got to branch out," he advised. "By doing this, if you don't make it one way you will another. At least that's the way I always felt about it. And it worked!"

Probably the only person who matches the pipe-smoking baritone professionally is comedian Bob Hope, who'll be with Bing tomorrow night to keep his friendly needle in action. The day we talked to Bing he had just finished rehearsing with Bob and was still spinning from the session.

"During the past two weeks," laughed Bing, "Hope has been at the Paramount Studios every day working on a new picture. He's been rehearsing with me. Over one weekend he flew to San Diego, where he did a show for Jimmy Doolittle, then last weekend he flew to San Francisco to do a benefit for the Crippled Children' s Auxiliary. And do you know what he had the nerve to say to me yesterday during the taping of our show? He said: 'You know, Bing, I feel a little tired."

"I can't understand why," replied the casual Crosby. "The only time you get tired is when you take a vacation."

If Hope ever does decide to learn to relax – which Bing says will never happen – he can take lessons from a real pro. Crosby has devoted a lifetime to developing

the art. "And believe me," he quips, "it ain't easy."

Kay Gardella, *Daily News*, May 13, 1962

The Bing Crosby Show (May 14th, 1962)

Paul Mavis of DVDTalk.com posted a detailed and thoughtful review on June 24, 2010 of the (then) new *Bing Crosby – The Television Specials: Vol. 1* DVD issued by Bing Crosby Enterprises. One of the shows included on the DVD was the May 14, 1962 show which was discussed in the previous article.

...Changing gears from the sophisticated abstractness of the 1959 special, this Bing Crosby Show special returns to a more conventional variety show format, embodying almost a sitcomy feel with its emphasis on homey leisure activities as the unifying theme linking the musical numbers. Certainly the addition of Road partner Bob Hope, as well as son Gary, lends an air of "old home week" to the sprightly, fun proceedings, but in this outing, comedy holds almost as much sway as the music. The show opens promisingly with an expressionistic approximation of a human "film factory" which morphs into, once the weekend arrives, sun revelers on the beach. The lyrics to *West Side Story's* "America" are changed to encompass a witty rundown of American's fervor for pursuing happiness in their spare time, with Bing crooning some prophetic lines about "credit cards and bank accounts crashing in A-mer-i-ca!" Hope stays low-key, and guest Edie Adams is cute and spunky, but as usual with Gary Crosby, he sinks the whole deal with his flat, too-husky tone and stiff delivery (with a chip-on-his-shoulder attitude which is remarkably unattractive).

Probably the section that will interest most fans is Crosby's and Hope's "ad-libs" (scripted, for the most part) over a selection of stills from their Road pictures, with their latest (and last) effort, *The Road to Hong Kong*, liberally plugged. It's slow-going at first, with Hope exhibiting that "gotta dash" demeanor that crept up into more and more of his TV appearances in the 1960s and 1970s (Hope has that 1,000-yard stare with one eye on the cue cards and the other on the stage door exit), but once the aging boys start to crack each other up, a lot of years melt away as they harmonize on a Road medley, including You Lucky People, You / Moonlight Becomes You / (We're Off On The) Road to Morocco / Personality / But Beautiful. Hope scores the best lines, from stating over a two shot of them, "There they are: the stars of Route 66," to "We better not be on the Road to Israel," when they show a picture of the two in Arab garb. But Crosby can hold his own with just a sly laugh and an implication: when they put up a shot of the two of them in bed together, Crosby exclaims, "What have we here?!" and Hope breaks up. The team seals the deal with this nostalgic return back in time with a nicely turned-out rendition of "Team Work".

The cast rehearse the Camp Carefree segment.

The sexy Edie Adams gets the big push with a splashy production of "I Need Some Night Life", while Bing alternates with a simple starry set as he sings the pretty "Let's Not Be Sensible". Pete Fountain and his Quartet are lowered down by platform and four thin cables, precariously hovering over the stage (god knows why) for a blistering version of "I Got Rhythm" before they're hoisted up again as Bing and Gary try to harmonize on "Play a Simple Melody".

The special's final segment takes place at "Camp Carefree," where our four performers are camp counselors (complete with beanies). Hope gets in a funny monologue about the camp's services ("And remember, everybody: we're here to take care of you. If you're nervous, we have a camp psychiatrist. A toothache? We've got a dentist. And if you get into any really serious trouble, we have a direct line to Richard Burton."), and the Smothers Brothers, in one of their early TV appearances, do a little funny bit about Tommy falling into a vat of chocolate (that has nothing to do with the show's theme), before the group takes the special home with a lively version of "Zing A Little Zong".

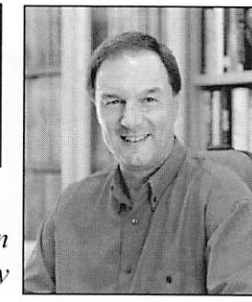
An altogether homey, conventional TV musical variety special, perfectly encapsulating the mood of 1962 network TV at that time.

Paul Mavis

(Paul Mavis is an internationally published film and television historian, a member of the Online Film Critics Society, and the author of The Espionage Filmography.)

KEEPING TRACK

Ken Crossland looks at the new releases



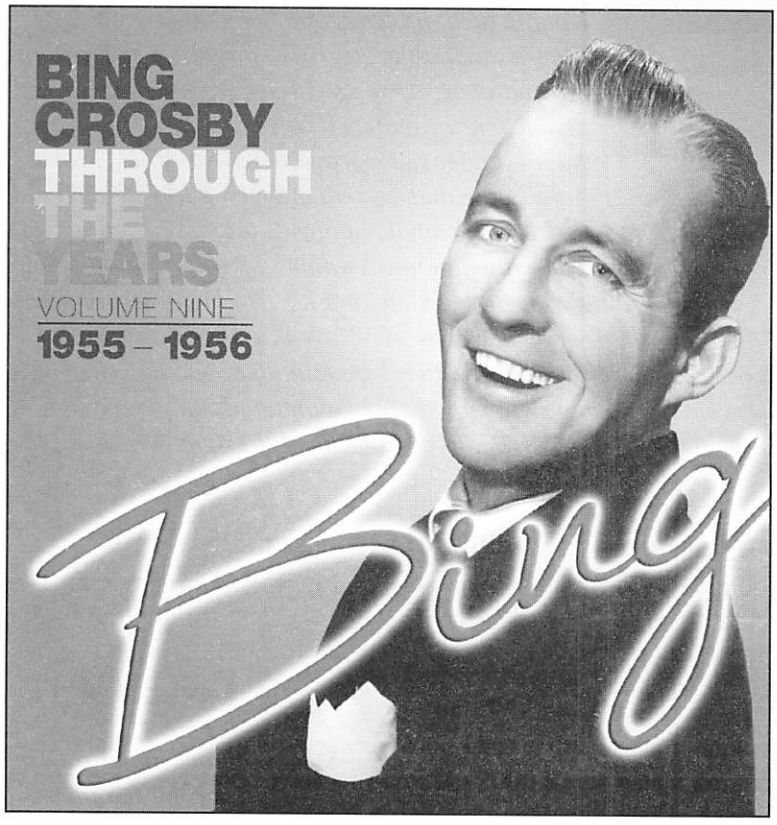
Ken Crossland takes a look at the new releases.

... and picks up one or two things held over from the Christmas period. And if you have been anxiously waiting for the answer to Bing's Mexican phrase in his Musical Autobiography introduction to "Alla en Rancho Grande", your wait is over!

COMPACT DISCS

Bing Crosby - Through The Years, Volume 9 Sepia 1185 UK £7.00/$12.50

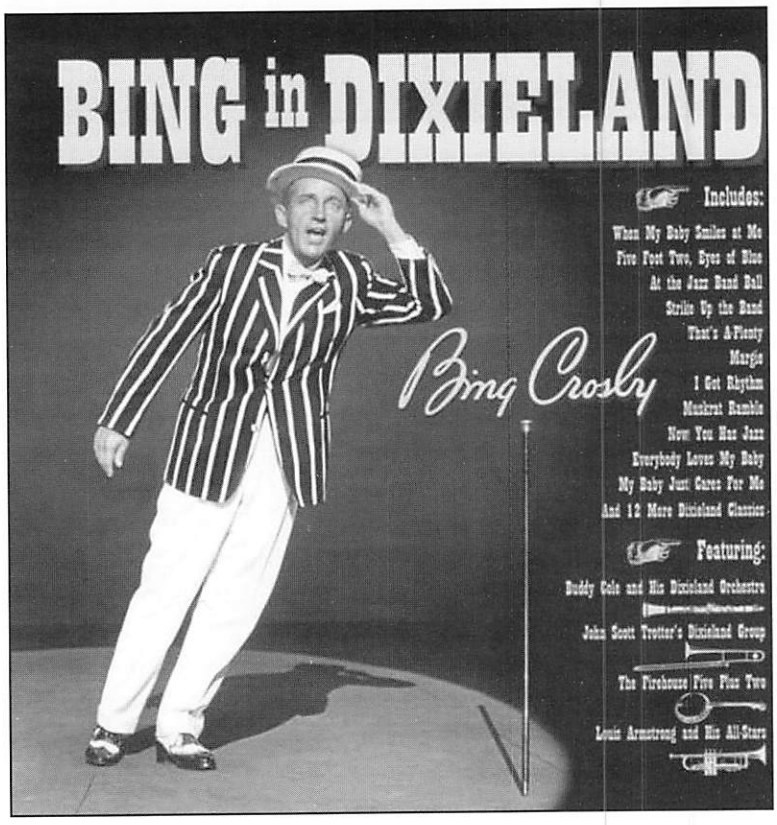
1. Christmas is a-Comin' 2. The First Snowfall 3. The Possibility's There (with Peggy Lee) 4. The Next Time It Happens 5. Something In Common 6. Look to Your Heart 7. Suddenly There's a Valley 8. Moments to Remember 9. Is Christmas Only a Tree? 10. The Longest Walk 11. John Barleycorn 12. When You're in Love 13. April Showers 14. Blues in the Night 15. Prisoner of Love 16. Memories Are Made of This 17. My Blue Heaven 18. Paper Doll 19. Ain't Misbehavin' 20. When My Baby Smiles At Me 21. A Little Kiss Each Morning 22. This Love of Mine 23. Mona Lisa 24. Thanks for the Memory 25. Around the World 26. I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day



As ever, pride of place goes to the latest in Sepia's chronological series. This release takes us into 1956 and indeed, beyond the end of Bing's long-running exclusive contract with American Decca. With subsequent recordings spread over various labels, most of which is already available on CD, the series will finally end with Volume 10 which will be reviewed in the next issue. Meanwhile, this volume is a real treasure, with an eclectic bunch of recordings that by chance - and with anything presented in strict chronological order, it has to be chance - come together to make a very listenable CD. Sound quality is sharp and clear, and whilst vinyl lovers might lament the absence of warmth in the sound, the restoration of these tracks, largely taken from original vinyl, is of the highest quality.

Aside from the two final tracks - both outstanding examples of the mid-Fifties Crosby voice, the CD is essentially split between two albums - or at least, would-be albums. The second of these, which accounts for tracks 13-24, appeared as "Songs I Wish I Had Sung" on Decca. Until this release however, none of us realised that tracks 1-10 could have been part of an abortive album session, they having previously been described as radio tracks that were mastered on the recording date shown. It's certainly plausible, although the three Christmas tracks were probably interlopers. Of the remaining seven tracks, one found its way out as a B-side, but the other six remained unissued until two Brunswick EPs in the UK in the early 60s. With three similar titles, it would have been a good album of mid-Fifties songs and Buddy Cole's arrangements are stylish and not dissimilar from those that Nelson Riddle was offering Sinatra at the same time. They make Jack Pleis's efforts on the "Songs I Wish I Had Sung" sound like antiques, although they probably sounded old-fashioned even before that album was released. There was of course a third album which chronologically, would fit between tracks 24 and 25 of this release and that was the infamous "Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings". Its exclusion, for reasons of copyright, is indicative of why the strict chronological series of releases is not sustainable beyond 1956, but it raises an interesting question that would pass a pleasant afternoon for a collector. Play tracks 3-8 and then 11 off this release, then 13-24 and then play the Bregman album. Three albums, if we accept the "ghost" hypothesis for the first. If you had to pick one to be the album to sustain Bing's legacy, which would it be? Give us your views and we will share them in the next issue. Oh, and buy this CD. It's brilliant.

Bing in Dixieland **BCE 6** **USA** **$13**



1. At the Jazz Band Ball 2. Sometimes I'm Happy 3. Muskrat Ramble 4. Way Down Yonder in New Orleans 5. Strike up the Band 6. That's A Plenty 7. My Baby Just Cares for Me 8. I'd Climb the Highest Mountain 9. Smiles 10. Just Around the Corner 11. The Banjo's Back in Town 12. When My Baby Smiles at Me 13. The Object of My Affection 14. I Got Rhythm 15. Margie 16. Yes Sir, That's My Baby 17. Oh How I Laugh When I Think How I Cried About You. 18. Everybody Loves My Baby 19. Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea 20. Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue 21. Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gave to Me. 22. Memphis Blues (with Ella Fitzgerald). 23. Now You Has Jazz 24. Now You Has Jazz (Video) (23 & 24 with Louis Armstrong)

This is the latest in the Bing Crosby Enterprises series of releases, which since the demise of the Collectors' Choice outlets, is now a little more complicated in terms of distribution channels. This is available on a CD direct from BCE, or alternatively, as a download from iTunes. It's a mixed bag of material, although half the tracks have appeared previously in the Mosaic collection of Bing & Buddy Cole. The tracks in question featured Buddy Cole and his trio augmented by another set of jazz musicians and the other tracks here - as the title implies - find Bing in similar upbeat, jazz band setting. All of them come from either Chesterfield or GE radio and boy, they do really bounce. A couple of other oddities leap out. One is the inclusion of "Banjo's Back in Town", which is Bing with Buddy Cole and his trio but a title that has not previously made it to any of the releases, and the audio and video versions of "Now You Has Jazz" from the Edsel TV show in 1957. The video is part of the iTunes download package, which I bought, but I am not clear if it is included on the CD from BCE. If you buy the CD, you are paying twice for tracks you may already have. If you download, you can pick and choose the tracks you want. Either way, it's a lively and tuneful example of Bing the rhythm singer par excellence.

Bing Crosby Christmas **Sonoma SBX2 0385** **USA** **$13**

1. White Christmas 2. Silent Night 3. Adeste Fideles 4. It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas 5. The Christmas Song 6. I'll Be Home for Christmas 7. Here Comes Santa Claus (with Peggy Lee) 8. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer (with Ella Fitzgerald) 9. Jingle Bells 10. Sleigh Ride 11. Silver Bells (with Ella Fitzgerald) 12. It's Christmas Time Again 13. The Secret of Christmas 14. The White World of Winter 15. Just What I Wanted for Christmas 16. A Marshmallow World (with Ella Fitzgerald)

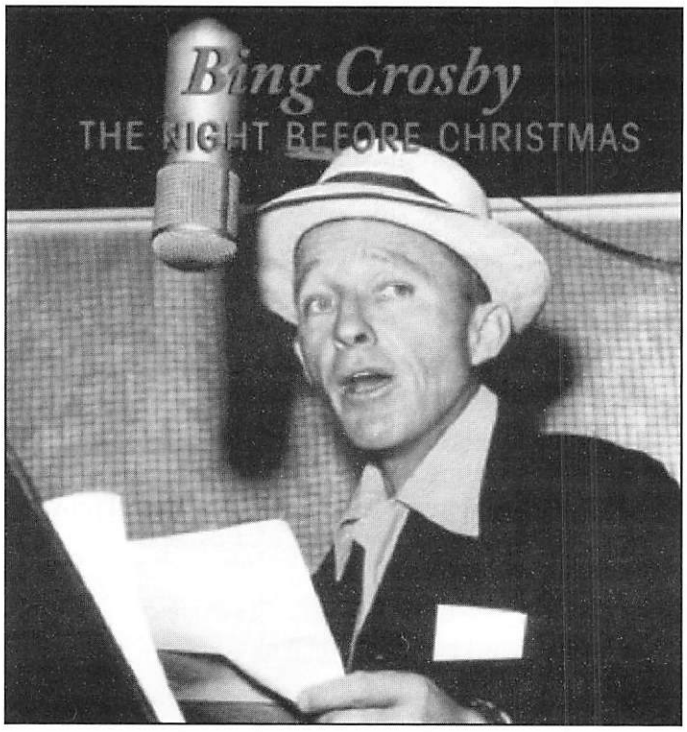
This CD also comes from the BCE stable although it's only available as a CD on the Sonoma label. What's more, it's only available for despatch to US and Canadian addresses, a bizarre throwback to the days when the internet did not exist and international shipping was so expensive that nobody bothered. So, if you are a UK reader, you will probably be relieved to hear that this CD is largely a retread of the "Christmas Sessions" that BCE released through Collectors' Choice last year. The two additional tracks are a version of "I'll Be Home for Christmas", from a KMH show, and "Marshmallow World" with Ella Fitzgerald.

The Night Before Christmas **BCE 5 (45 rpm vinyl)** **USA** **$8**

1. The Night Before Christmas 2. Adeste Fideles 3. Away in a Manger (with Kathryn Crosby)

Who said vinyl was dead? Most of us probably at some time, but it seems we were wrong. Vinyl sales in 2011 were 40% up on the year before, and the highest for six years. So, as part of this back to the future trend, this is a 45-rpm single from BCE, featuring "The Night Before Christmas" poem recorded in 1968 for an overseas Voice of America radio programme and two items that Bing sang on his 1960 "Christmas Sing With Bing" radio show. It seems however that this simplicity was not quite what BCE intended as their Facebook pages contained this announcement.

"Due to a mastering error the new Bing Crosby single, "The Night Before Christmas" features a



previously unissued version of "Adeste Fidelis" on the B-side. The sleeve indicates that the song is taken from a 1952 General Electric radio program but the version on the single is in fact taken from the same 1960 Christmas Sing with Bing radio program as the other B-side track, "Away in a Manger"".

And just to complete the story, our editor tells me that the version in question actually dates from the 1956 "Christmas Sing with Bing". You'll be wishing you never asked. Still, all good stuff and for me at least, all three versions were things I did not have before.

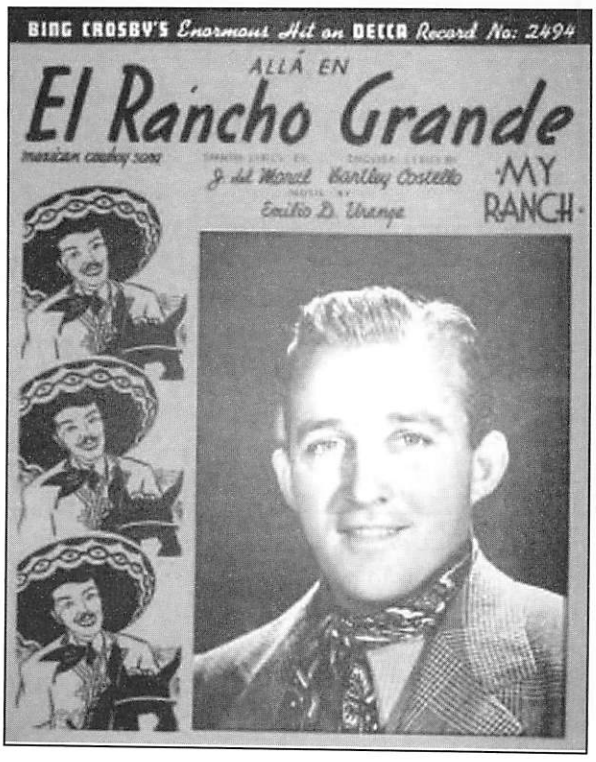
There was at least one other Christmas release that passed my way, 14 familiar commercial tracks that appeared on "Bing Crosby Christmas Favorites", a US issue British readers will gather from the spelling of the last word of its title. And if you are in the UK, you might spot "Ireland's Greatest Hits", all Bing tracks, available from Emerald Music. Expensive at £12 for tracks that have previously been readily available.

DVD

Nothing to detain us on the DVD front, alas. Amazon.com in the USA is offering "Welcome Stranger" on a standalone basis - it has previously been in a box set - although this is an "on-demand" production rather than a conventional commercial release.

What's on the Web?

One of the most basic features of the World Wide Web of course is e-mail and the ability to correspond with friends in seconds when previously a letter across the Atlantic would have taken a week just to pass one way. It was through the marvels of the modern world that I have an answer to the question I posed last time in my review of "Through the Years Volume 8". You may remember that I sought clarification as to what it was that Bing said in his introduction to "Alla En Rancho Grande" in the Autobiography set. I'm grateful to Richard Baker and Anton Garcia-Fernandez for answering a 40-year conundrum although I must confess to more than a tinge of disappointment when I learned that what Bing says is not a Mexican or Spanish phrase at all. "Gonna do a little Mexican come-all-ye" he says. "Come all-ye"? The only time I had heard that phrase was in the opening bars of the English verse to "Adeste Fidelis" but sure enough, that's what he says. Anton even referred me to Webster's Dictionary (Morocco bound, of course) for a definition - "a popular narrative ballad, so called from the typical opening words."



That in turn prompted an interesting exchange with Anton about the song and Bing's versions of it from 1939 and 1954. Anton pointed out to me that in the version from the Autobiography set, Bing's Spanish verse omits the line "Habia una rancherita". As a result, Bing sings "Que alegre me decia" three times rather than twice, strangely for one who spoke Spanish and must have understood the words, because it makes a nonsense of the song as the translation then reads:
Alla en el Rancho Grande (Over by the Big Ranch)
Alla donde vivia (Over by where I used to live)
Que alegre me decia (Who merrily said to me)
Que alegre me decia (Who merrily said to me)
Que alegre me decia (Who merrily said to me)
The missing line - Habia una rancherita - translates as "there was

a little ranch girl" which of course then makes sense of what follows. The story however, does not end there. What is it that the little ranch girl said? You would imagine that if you went back to the original 1939 version you would have the answer. Not so. Bing's 1939 version only includes the same Spanish lines as above, albeit this time with the rancherita line included. So why did Bing refrain from telling us what the ranch girl said? To find the answer, Anton directed me to a Gene Autry version on YouTube. After the "Que alegre me decia" line, here's the rest of Autry's rendition, with translation:

Te voy a hacer tus calzones (I'm going to make your underwear)
Como los que usa el ranchero (Just like that worn by ranchers)
Te los comienzo de lana (I'll start it in wool)
Y los acabo de cuero. (And finish it in leather)

Wool underwear finished in leather! Rather Ragtime Joe than me. There is an alternative translation of "calzones" that has "pants" rather than "underwear", which might make a little more sense, and indeed there are websites that list the original Spanish lyric in full, with translation (see http://lyricstranslate.com/en/rancho-grande-big-ranch.html) although as the song goes, the story gets stranger and stranger. Bing's "ropin' and a-tyin" is much more simple. And as Anton and I said, how wonderful that over 70 years after Bing recorded the song, it can still provide interest and intrigue.

Happy listening!

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*Bing with two of his co-stars in the sitcom series directed by James Sheldon. Carol Faylen is on the left, Diane Sherry is on the right. Carol was the daughter of character actor Frank Faylen who appeared in several of Bing's films. She seems to have retired from show business after the sitcom series. Diane went on to have a career in TV and movies and played the part of Lana Lang in the 1978 film Superman. James Sheldon has had a busy time as a Director of many episodes for well-known TV series such as The Man from Uncle, The Fugitive, Sanford and Son, M*A*S*H and many more.*

Hillsborough
January 30, 1965

Dear Jim:

I told you on the set, but I wanted to put it in writing - in all my experience, Jim, I've never worked with a nicer fella than you, or a fella more qualified in your job.

Your patience is inexhaustible. I can't recall any time on the set where you ever exhibited any signs of falling apart, blowing up, or taking a walk - and you had many situations where such behavior would have been justifiable. Tremendous control, old boy!

I had a great time just because of the fact that you were at the helm, and in spite of my bursitis problems.

I do hope we can get together on a film sometime -any one of the projects we discussed should be definite possibilities.

As far as the series is concerned, I don't think we made a single episode that we have to be ashamed of or worried about. I just got into that type of thing about five or six years too late.

With all this wild semi-pornographic type of thing that audiences are viewing nowadays, it's not conceivable they're going to have much of an appetite for our gentle, casual stories.

The way the trend is going it's conceivable that Norman Mailer and Tennessee Williams and fellas of that stamp will soon be doing all the writing.

Well, in any case, we closed on a high point - with Pamela Curran on the set, didn't we?

Hope to see you, Jim, either in New York or on the Coast -

Always your friend,

Bing Crosby

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